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Story



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Encounter

AUGUST 1975

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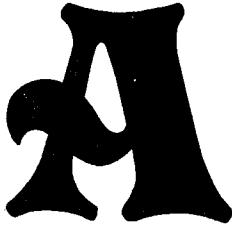
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Without Blood

TOWARDS DAWN Henry woke, but did not open his eyes. He saw a luminous white mass fold in upon itself, the residue of a dream he could not recall. Superimposed black shapes with arms and legs drifted upwards and away like crows against a blank sky. When he opened his eyes the room was sunk in deep blue light. He was staring into the eyes of his daughter. She stood close to the bed, her head level with his. Pigeons grunted and stirred on the window ledge. Father and daughter, they stared and neither spoke. Footsteps receded on the street outside. Henry's eyes narrowed. Marie's grew larger, she moved her lips faintly, her tiny body shivered under the white nightgown. She watched her father drift into sleep. Presently she said, "I've got a vagina." Henry moved his legs and woke again. "Yes," he said. "So I'm a girl, aren't I?" Henry supported himself on his elbow. "Go back to bed now, Marie. You're cold." She moved away from the bed, out of his reach, and stood facing the window, facing the grey light. "Are pigeons boys or girls?" Henry lay on his back and said, "Boys and girls." Marie moved closer to the sound of the pigeons and listened. "Do girl pigeons have a vagina?" "Yes." "Where do they?" "Where do you think?" She considered, she listened. She looked back at him over her shoulder. "Under their feathers?" "Yes." She laughed delightedly. The grey light was brightening. "Into bed now," Henry said with faked urgency. She walked towards him. "In *your* bed Henry," she demanded. He moved over for her and pulled back the covers. She climbed in and he watched her fall asleep.

An hour later Henry slipped from the bed without waking the child. He stood beneath the dribbling shower and afterwards paused

for a moment in front of a large mirror and regarded his naked dripping body. Lit from one side only by the watery light of first day he appeared to himself sculpted, monumental, capable of superhuman feats. He dressed hurriedly. When he was pouring coffee in the kitchen he heard loud voices and footsteps on the stairs outside his flat. Automatically he glanced out the window. A light rain was falling. The light was dropping. Henry went to the bedroom to watch out the window. Behind him Marie still slept. The sky was thick and angry. As far as he could see in either direction the street was filling with people. They were unrolling canvas tarpaulins, working in twos, in families. It grew darker. They stretched the canvas across the road and secured the ends to drainpipes and railings. They rolled barrels into the centre of the street to collect water from the tarpaulins. For all this activity there was silence, jealous, competitive silence. As usual fights were breaking out. Space was limited. Beneath Henry's window two figures wrestled. It was hard to make them out at first. Now he saw that one was a heavily built woman, the other a man of slight build in his early twenties. Their arms were locked about each other's neck. They edged sideways like a monstrous crab. The rain fell in a continuous sheet. The wrestlers were ignored. Their tarpaulins lay in piles at their feet. The disputed space was taken by others. Now they fought for pride alone and a few children gathered round to watch. They rolled to the ground. The woman was suddenly on top, pinning the man to the ground with her knee pressed against his throat. His legs kicked uselessly. A small dog, its pink member erect and vivid in the gloom, threw itself into the struggle. It clasped the man's head between

its front paws. Its haunches quivered like plucked strings. Its pink tongue flashed from the root. The children laughed and pulled it away.

Marie was there before him when he turned away from the window. "What are you doing, Henry?" "Watching the rain," he said, and gathered her up in his arms and carried her to the bathroom.

IT TOOK AN HOUR to walk to work. They stopped once, halfway across Chelsea bridge. Marie climbed from her pushchair and Henry held her up so she could look down at the river. It was a daily ritual. She gazed in silence and struggled a little when she'd had enough. Thousands walked in the same direction each morning. Henry rarely recognised a friend. If he did they walked together in silence.

The Ministry rose from a vast plain of pavement. The pushchair bumped over green wedges of weed. The stones were cracking and subsiding. Human refuse littered the plain. Vegetables, rotten and trodden down, cardboard boxes flattened into beds, the remains of fires and the carcasses of roasted dogs and cats, rusted tin, vomit, worn tyres, animal excrement. An old dream of horizontal lines converging on the thrusting steel and glass perpendicular was now beyond recall. The air above the fountain was grey with flies. Men and boys came there daily to squat on the wide concrete rim and defecate. The women went elsewhere. In the distance, along one edge of the plain, several hundred men and women still slept. They were wrapped in striped, brightly coloured blankets which in day time marked out shop space. From that group came the sound of a child crying, carried on the wind. No one stirred. "Why is that baby crying?" Marie shouted suddenly, and her own voice was lost in that big, miserable place. They hurried on. They were late. They were tiny, the only moving figures on the great expanse.

To save time Henry ran down the stairs to the basement with Marie in his arms. Even before he was through the swing doors someone was saying to him, "We like them to be on time." He turned and set Marie down. The playgroup leader rested her hand on Marie's head. She was over six feet tall and

emaciated. Her eyes were sunk deep and broken blood vessels danced on her cheeks. When she spoke again she stretched her lips tightly round her teeth and rose on her toes. "And if you don't mind . . . the subscriptions. Would you care to settle now?" Henry was three months behind. He promised to bring money the next day. She shrugged and took Marie's hand. Henry watched them pass through a door. He caught a glimpse of two black children in a violent embrace. The noise was shrill and deafening, and cut off dead when the door closed behind them.

WHEN, THIRTY MINUTES later, Henry began to type the second letter of the morning, he could no longer remember the contents of the first. He worked from the long-hand scrawl of some higher official. When he came to the end of the fifteenth letter, shortly before lunch, he could not remember its beginning. And he did not care to move his eyes up the page to see. He carried the letters into a smaller office and gave them to someone. He did not see who it was who took them. Henry returned to his desk. He had minutes now to waste before lunch. All the typists were smoking as they worked. The air was thick . . . sharp with smoke, not of this day alone but of ten thousand previous days and ten thousand days to come. There was no way forward. It was a trap. Henry lit a cigarette and thought of his daughter. He descended the sixteen floors to the basement and joined a long queue of parents, mostly mothers, who came in their lunch hour to see their children. It was a murmuring queue of supplicants. They came out of need, not duty. They spoke to each other in soft voices of their children and their children's gifts. The line shuffled towards the swing doors. Each child had to be signed for. The play-group leader stood by the doors. By her presence alone she conveyed a need for silence and order. The parents complied, and signed. Marie was waiting for him just beyond the doors, and when she saw him she raised two clenched fists above her head and made an innocent little dance. Henry signed and took her hand.

The sky had cleared. A sickly warmth rose from the flagstones. The vast plain teemed now like a colony of ants. Above it hung a

pale sickle moon, clear against the blue sky. Marie climbed in the pushchair and Henry wheeled her through the crowds. All those with something to sell crammed on to the plain. They spread their goods on coloured blankets and shouted their merits into the fetid air. An old woman was selling half-used cakes of soap. They were arranged across a bright yellow rug like precious stones. Marie chose a green piece the size and shape of a chicken's egg. Henry bargained with the woman and brought her down to half her first price. As they exchanged money for soap she made a show of scowls and Marie recoiled from her in surprise. The old woman smiled. She reached into her bag and brought out a small present. But Marie climbed back into her pushchair and would not take it. "Go away," Marie shouted at the old woman, "Go away." They walked on. Henry headed for a far corner of the plain where there was space to sit and eat lunch. He made a wide detour round the fountain, on the rim of which men perched like featherless birds.

They sat on a parapet which ran along one side of the plain and ate bread and cheese. Below them stretched the deserted buildings of Whitehall. Henry asked Marie questions about the play-group. There were rumours of indoctrination. His questions were casual and unpressing. "What did you play with today?" She told him excitedly of a game with water and a boy who had cried, a boy who always cried. He took from his pocket a small treat, cold, bright yellow, mysteriously curved. He laid it in her hands. "What is it, Henry?" "It's a banana. You can eat it." He showed her how to peel the skin away, and told her how they grew in bunches in a far-off country. Later he asked, "Did the lady read you a story, Marie?" She turned and stared over the parapet. "Yes," she said after a while. "What was it about?" She giggled. "It was about bananas . . . bananas . . . bananas." They began the half-mile walk back to the Ministry and Marie chanted her new word quietly to herself.

FAR AHEAD the crowd was collecting round a point of interest. Some people ran past them to join it. The people were forming a circle about a low compulsive beat, about a man with a drum. By the time Henry and Marie

arrived the circle was ten deep. The cries of the man were muffled. Henry lifted Marie on to his shoulders and pushed deeper into the crowd. By his clothes the people recognised him as a Ministry worker and indifferently stood aside. Now it was possible to see. In the centre of the ring was a squat, black oil drum. Animal skin was stretched over one end and the man beside it, a man the size of a great lumbering bear, banged it with his bare fist. Sacking doused in red paint wound round his body like a toga. His hair was red and coarse and reached almost to his waist. The hair on his bare arms was thick and matted like animal fur. Even his eyes were red. He was not shouting words. With each pulse of the drum he gave out a deep loud growl. He was watching something closely in the crowd. Henry followed his eyeline and saw a large rusty tin passing from hand to hand. He heard the clink of coins. Then he saw in the crowd a dull flash of reflected sunlight. It was a long sword, slightly curved with an ornamental handle. The crowd reached out to hold it, touch it, assure themselves of its substantiality. It moved in counter-motion to the biscuit-tin. Marie tugged at Henry's ear and demanded explanations. He pushed deeper towards the circle till they were second from the front. The tin came close. Henry felt the man's fierce red eyes on him and threw in three small coins. The man beat the drum and roared. The tin passed on. Marie shivered on Henry's shoulders and he stroked her bare knees for comfort. Suddenly the man broke into words, a crude chant on two notes. His words were ponderous and slurred. Henry made them out, and at the same time saw the girl for the first time. "Without blood . . . without blood . . . without blood. . . ." She was standing far to one side, a girl of about sixteen, naked from the waist up and barefoot. She stood perfectly still, hands at her side, feet together, staring at the ground a few feet in front of her. Her hair too, was red, but fine and cropped short. Round her waist she wore a piece of sacking. It was possible to believe she was without blood.

NOW THE DRUM took on a steady arterial pulse. The sword was with the man. He held it high above his head and glowered at the crowd. Someone from the

crowd brought him the biscuit tin. He peered inside and shook his great head. The tin was returned to the crowd. The drum beat accelerated. "Without blood", the man shouted. "Through her belly, out her back, without blood." The tin appeared in his hands again, and again he refused it. The crowd was desperate. Those at the back pushed forward to throw in money. Those who had given shouted at those who had not. Quarrels broke out. The tin was filling. When it returned the third time it was accepted. The crowd sighed with relief. The drum beat ceased. By a movement of his head the man ordered the girl, surely his daughter, into the centre of the circle. She stood with the oil drum between her and her father. Henry saw her legs shaking. The crowd was silent, anxious to miss nothing. The cries of vendors reached them across the plain as though from another world. Marie shouted out suddenly, her voice thin with fear, "What's she going to do?" Henry shushed her, the man was putting the sword into his daughter's hands. He did not take his eyes off her and she seemed powerless to look anywhere but into his face. He hissed something in her ear and she raised the point of the sword to her belly. Her father bent down and emptied the biscuit tin into a leather bag which he slung across his shoulder. The sword shook in the girl's hands. The crowd stirred impatiently. Henry felt sudden warmth spread across his neck and down his back. Marie had urinated. He lifted her to the ground and at that moment, urged on by her father, the girl pushed the tip of the sword half an inch into her belly. Marie screamed with rage. She beat her fists against Henry's legs. "Lift me up," she sobbed. A small coin of crimson, brilliant in the sunlight, spread outwards round the shaft of the sword. Someone in the crowd sneered, "Without blood." The father secured the leather bag beneath his toga. He made towards the sword as if to plunge it through his daughter. She collapsed at his feet and the sword clattered on to the pavement. The gigantic man picked it up and shook it at the angry crowd. "Pigs," he shouted. "Greedy pigs." The crowd was enraged and shouted back. "Cheat . . . murderer . . . he's got our money. . . ."

But they were afraid, for when he pulled his daughter to her feet and dragged her off they scattered to make a path for him. He swung the sword about his head. "Pigs," he kept on shouting, "Get back, you pigs." A stone was thrown hard and caught him high on the shoulder. He spun round, dropped his daughter and went for the crowd like a madman, sweeping the sword in huge vicious arcs. Henry picked up Marie and ran with the rest of them. When he turned back to look the man was far away, urging his daughter along. The crowd had left him alone with his money. Henry and Marie walked back and found the pushchair on its side. One of the handles was bent.

THAT EVENING, on the long walk home, Marie sat quietly and asked no questions. Henry felt anxious for her, but he was too tired to be of use. After the first mile she was asleep. He crossed the river by Vauxhall bridge and stopped halfway across, this time for himself. The Thames was lower than he had ever seen it. Some said that one day the river would dry up and giant bridges would uselessly span fresh meadows. He remained on the bridge ten minutes smoking a cigarette. It was difficult to know what to believe. Many said that tap water was slow poison. At home he lit all the candles in the house to dispel Marie's fears. She followed him about closely. He cooked a fish on the paraffin stove and they ate in the bedroom. He talked to Marie about the sea which she had never seen. Later he read her a story and she fell asleep on his lap. She woke as he was carrying her to her bed. She said, "What did that lady do with her sword?" Henry said, "She danced. She danced with it in her hands." Marie's clear blue eyes looked deeply into his own. He sensed her disbelief and regretted his lie.

He worked late into the night. Towards two o'clock he went to the window in his bedroom and opened it. The moon had sunk and clouds had moved in and covered the stars. He heard a pack of dogs down by the river. To the north he could see the fires burning on the Ministry plain. He wondered if things would change much in his lifetime. Behind him Marie called out in her sleep and laughed.

Philippe Ariès

La Famille

A Report from France

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS in recent years I have been present at meetings of doctors, sociologists, psychologists or militant Christians imbued with the doctrines of humanism, where the subject of debate was the present state of the Family or married couple, of the Wife, or the Child. I noticed at the time that these searchers after truth, whatever their background discipline, invariably posed the problem in similar terms, as if dealing with something self-evident. All were convinced that, although man had initiated his political and social liberation in the 19th century, even in mid-20th century his private life still remained subject to age-old taboos and constraints. The family in particular, it was said, has retained even to the present day its patriarchal, authoritarian, divisive character, condemning wife and children to perpetual tutelage.

Everything was apparently going on as if nothing had changed since ancient days or the Middle Ages, as if people had had to wait for the mid-20th century before industrial societies began to loosen this age-old servitude and liberate the wife, the child and the married couple in a succession of Falls of the Bastille. Until the 1960s the history of the Family had remained immobile and obscurantist and then, hey presto, the great revolution emancipating private life and precipitating it into modernity!

A concept such as this produced strange arguments—strange at least from the historian's point of view. Doctors and social workers pictured the woman of today, the Woman of our Industrial Societies, as living in terror of a pregnancy which traditional marital practice rendered inevitable. She was therefore supposed to be acting, in the middle of the 20th century, as if she knew nothing about contraception until the day when her anguish drove her to cross the threshold of a family planning clinic. What did her 19th-century ancestors do about it?

In fact I think that these searchers after truth, who were educated people, knew perfectly well that demographic Malthusianism has existed for a full century. They were unable, however, to fit this historical fact into their "synchronist" concept of society; they consequently rejected it as a foreign body and refused to admit that it possessed any general validity as an explanation.

This example shows how essential and urgent it is in the present stage of general—and in particular Christian—sociological thinking for the historian to intervene—as essential and urgent as the intervention of a doctor in a case of serious illness. By historian I mean a man who invariably thinks in comparatively long periods and, when dealing with attitudes of mind, in very long periods.

History enables us to put in their correct place and in their correct order facts which contemporary observers, who live with them, tend to believe are unique or extraordinary. By linking these to other facts in the story of development thus reconstituted, the historian can dedramatise them and make their import clearer. That is what I propose to attempt to do in the case of the Family.

THE FAMILY which present-day reformers of traditional morals have taken as their target is not the age-old family; it is not even that of the Middle Ages or the *ancien régime*. This must be clearly understood. The history of the family is overlaid with erroneous ideas dating back to the pattern built up in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by philosophical luminaries and traditionalist sociologists from the Vicomte de Bonald to Pierre Le Play. This is not the place to correct them. It is enough to recall that the patriarchal family has never existed, at least not in our societies. The old family invariably consisted solely of parents and children, extended in rare

cases and in rich houses to certain unmarried relatives. The theory frequently advanced of evolution from the extended family to the restricted or "nuclear" family has no factual basis.¹

The difference between the old-style family and that of the 19th–20th centuries stems not from size but from *function*. It is this notion of function which I wish to pursue, for this will enable us to situate the family in society as a whole.

TO TAKE A CONCRETE EXAMPLE: Gérard Bouchard, a Canadian historian and sociologist, recently devoted a doctoral thesis to the study of an 18th-century village in the Sologne; its name was Sennely and it had 600 inhabitants.² The author has endeavoured to elucidate what lay at the root of collective existence in those days, what the basis was of village social life. Today we would imagine that the social integration of the individual was achieved through the family, that one of the principal functions of the family was to ensure this socialisation. But the author soon realised that in his village "such was not the case" in the 17th and 18th centuries. He states that the family was restricted and short-lived since it was quickly broken up, not of course by divorce, but by the death of one of the partners. "Couples were parted prematurely; numerous hasty re-marriages were made at any age and between all ages. . . ." He cites the example of Jean Richard who, at the age of 74, married his third wife Françoise Cartou (aged 24), his previous wife having died four months earlier at the age of 18. He adds this perceptive comment: "These are facts which give food for thought on the nature of the feelings between partners at least in the case of re-marriage." The parish priest noted: "They all marry for material reasons rather than from inclination." This may not be true in every

case but it seems generally to have applied to those who had possessions. We know, on the other hand, that the poorest members maintained that they had married solely from "inclination" when it came to claiming rights of kinship. They still had to have a house with a little land and "the family" was primarily a material arrangement. A widow, for instance, was frequently impelled to marry her late husband's friend.

THE FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY, therefore, was to preserve and hand on a material heritage and to facilitate the pursuit of a profession. Gérard Bouchard affirms that, under these conditions, it was incapable of ensuring the socialisation of the individuals who belonged to it. "To what extent", he asks "was this family grouping suitable for fulfilling the various functions habitually attributed to the so-called patriarchal traditional family?"

"From the economic point of view, its role was restricted. Not being very numerous (due to mortality) it did not succeed in producing the reservoir of labour required for agricultural work. . . . Nor did it provide the homestead, the welcoming *refuge* where *children and adults* formed deep and abiding friendships. In the first place the house was *too small*. In addition such sons as had not fallen victim to infant mortality did not stay at home but went early into service or were apprenticed to a farmer or craftsman. Then the family was prematurely broken up by the death of one of the partners followed almost at once by the marriage of the eldest son if already an adult and most probably by that of the next in line. In all probability consciousness of '*chez soi*', of '*home*', barely existed."

The author's conclusion is valid not only for this little village in Sologne: "It seems altogether improbable that such a group, itself so loosely integrated, could serve as a basis for social integration."

During the Middle Ages and the *ancien régime*, sociability was ensured, not by the family but by a close-knit community consisting of neighbours, friends, and relatives, and established through the frequency of contacts and the sense of membership of the same circle of relationships. Here lies the essential factor which, for want of a better word, we may call the *Milieu*. It was a social grouping in which the sense of family became diluted and from which the family hardly differentiated itself. Moreover, it bore rule over the families in the sense that it controlled the equilibrium of marriages and that between the sexes. It imposed limits by means of collective demonstrations such as the charivari and by the pressure of public opinion. It was in this *Milieu*

¹ A good description of this "evolution theory" recently appeared in the introduction to the book *L'Envol de la France: Portrait de la France dans les années 80* (Hachette, 1973). Passing rapidly from our "350 sauces" and "350 cheeses" to the evolution of family structure in North-west Europe, Herman Kahn writes (p.11): "Taking the place of the traditional extended family with all its complications and its numerous demands, the nuclear family gives freedom and independence to its members. It has removed the obstacle to thrift and the fear that, if you made economies, the other members of the family would demand their share and your money be thereby dispersed. It has eliminated the patriarchal tyranny of the head of the family who was able to impose a veto on any action by his younger sons."

² Gérard Bouchard. *Un village immobile* (Plon, 1972).

rather than in the smaller family circle that a child lived until the not far distant day when he was exported into a family other than his own as an apprentice.

The *ancien régime* family, therefore, had no socialising function; nor did it have an educative one. The child did not remain long in his family apart from the eldest son who was destined to succeed his father at an early age. Until the 16th or 17th centuries in the case of the upper classes and into the 19th century in the case of the lower the child did not go to school. He was neither in his parents' house nor among children of his own age. As soon as might be he was attached to an adult and mixed with other adults—on the farm, in the workshop, at the court of some Lord, in the Bishop's palace, in the house of the local canon, out hunting, at war, in a tavern or a house of ill repute. He learnt to live by being brought into contact with the crudest realities of life including some which we think best concealed from him today.

HERE WE HAVE COME a long way indeed from the generally accepted concept of the old-style *famille*. I fear that the legally-minded will accuse me of indulging in paradox. They will be surprised that I have said nothing about the well-known evolution of the law which concentrated power in the hands of the husband and father and by contrast reduced the wife and mother to a subordinate status to which she was not condemned in the Middle Ages. But these legal provisions dealt with the family as an instrument for the conveyance of possessions, for the preservation of honour and of the monarchical image. The effect of these laws was different when applied to day-to-day practice within the family and the functions of socialisation and emotional relationships.

THIS ANCIEN RÉGIME FAMILY, characterised by lack of cohesion, if I may use the phrase, was destined to change, starting in the 17th century in the upper classes and in the 19th century in the lower. This new-model family may be regarded as established from the 18th century onwards. It is the family of the present day, at least it is that which we attack or defend, that which gives rise to the question "whether it will survive" the present upheaval in morals.

It is characterised by two essential features: it has taken the place of the old social circle, and

it takes care of the education and advancement of its children.

I have just emphasised the importance in *ancien régime* society of the *Milieu*. The biggest phenomenon of 19th- and 20th-century social history is the disappearance of this *Milieu*, in other words of the tight network of relationships of which it was formed. It disappeared only gradually. The process was more rapid among the bourgeois classes and in the big cities. It was slower among the lower classes and in certain areas (particularly south-eastern France which became a veritable stronghold of the old sociability as has been well demonstrated by its historians, Messrs Agulhon and Vovelle).

People have ceased to live on the street or in public places, to meet in the great salons of dignitaries where soirées were held. People now stay at home, and "home" is defended against prying eyes like a fortress. The great 17th-century house consisted of a series of inter-connecting rooms without set purpose; and in them residents, visitors, friends or clients moved around as if in a public place. Privacy was guaranteed only in bed when the curtains of the four-poster were drawn turning it into a *petite cabine*. From the 18th century onwards rooms became separate and opened on to a passage. They also became specialised—drawing room, dining room, bedrooms. They were closed to strangers who could not enter with the same freedom. Finally, apart from the exceptions such as lawyers, doctors and certain craftsmen, the houses in which people lived were no longer used for professional activities, as had been the general rule before. This is a fact of some significance: when people no longer live and work in the same place this constitutes a major change in way of life. The change initiated a polarisation of life in two directions; on the one hand, the house where a man slept, ate and met his wife and children; on the other hand, the place where he worked—office, workshop, or factory.

During the 19th and 20th centuries day-to-day life became concentrated round these two poles, the house and the work-place. Each had its own purpose, its own attraction and its own social life. But between them there was nothing; where once had been the thickly populated collective *Milieu* there was a vacuum. Little by little the *Milieu* vanished; it shrank like a shagreen, though perpetuated in some ways in a new guise by the café (and in particular by *le petit café du quartier*, the Marseilles version of which has been

so well analysed by M. Agulhon). Today, however, at least in the big cities and elsewhere as well, there is nothing. From 1950 onwards the progress of urbanisation and the development of the motor-car and television have accelerated a movement already begun. *Boulot-dodo, dodo-boulot*. From work to bed and back again! The basic significance of this is not merely that a man has no time to draw breath between his work and his bed but that between his work-place and his resting-place there is no other human *Milieu*. Lack of this has recently been held to be regrettable, to constitute a defect in our civilisation. Throughout the 19th century, however, it was held up by the moralists as a sign of progress—anything which might deter the husband from returning home after his work or entice the wife to leave her house was suspect. Sometimes, particularly among the lower classes, the husband cheated. Increasingly, however, he himself chose the straight and narrow path and organised his life around his work and his family.

UNDER THESE NEW CONDITIONS (and I re-emphasise their novelty) the family assumed a role unknown to it hitherto, that of refuge. Family solidarity had indeed existed before; but it had been manifested only in serious situations, when one of the members was threatened. Now the family meant something more—a permanent day-to-day refuge from an unfriendly outside world. Pride of place was henceforth taken by the sentiments linking the inmates of this refuge to the increasing exclusion of all other feelings. When this stage of evolution was complete the family had a monopoly of the emotions or “affectivity.”

This affectivity was also governed by the family's new role in education. The disappearance of the *Milieu* and the social circle acted upon the family from the outside. Its educative function changed it from the inside. As early as the 16th century, though the phenomenon did not really

make itself felt until the 17th, people revolted against launching their children into adult society at an early age. It became customary to place them in a sort of quarantine before they started life, in the cloistered world of the school. Education in school took the place of apprenticeship. The school, however, was not merely a method of handing on knowledge or a culture; it was primarily a place where the children were segregated, where they were divorced from adult society, whereas previously apprenticeship had injected them into it. This process may seem antithetical to the concept of family but in fact it lies at the root of the great change which has given birth to the modern family. Through the school the child has been discovered by his own family and has become the centre of it.³

TODAY, WITH A PROLONGED PERIOD of universal schooling, the school may remove a child from the family. This was not the case, however, from the 17th century to the early 20th. In those days, in fact, communication between the child (now isolated at school) and the adult world took place solely through the family. Though school may have removed the child physically, for an increasingly prolonged period it kept him economically and morally dependent upon his family. Parents considered themselves responsible for the child's health and training; they became increasingly preoccupied with his future and his advancement. So the modern family became organised around the child, and it put up around him a protective barrier which isolated him as effectively as did the walls of his school.

The importance within the family assumed by the child and his education led, not only to a new family relationship but also to a change in size of family. The old-style family was more or less numerous depending upon the age at which the parents married and the length of their lives; but it did not aim at a systematic reduction in the number of children. Though the question is a controversial one, it will be accepted that the family either did not know about or at least did not practice even the most elementary form of contraception.⁴ By contrast the modern family has always been kept deliberately small. The new role of the child within the family has almost automatically entailed a reduction of the birth-rate—the number of children will be limited by the ambitions which one entertains for them and the resources which one has available.

³ Ed. Note: Philippe Ariès has given an excellent description of this development in his book *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (Plon, Paris, 1960 and 1974; *Centuries of Childhood*, Jonathan Cape, 1972). See also his chapter “Problèmes de l'Éducation” in the composite work *La France et les Français* (Gallimard, Coll. La Pleiade 1972), pp. 871–960.

⁴ See, in particular: H. Bergues, P. Ariès, E. Helin, L. Henry, M. Riquet, A. Sauvy, J. Sutter *La Prévention des naissances dans la famille* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1960). See also the (frequently spicy) articles on this subject by E. Le Roy Ladurie in *Le Territoire de l'historien* (Bibliothèque des Histoires, Gallimard 1973).

Finally, in this Malthusian family, concentrated around the child, the centre of gravity has shifted. It has moved from the father, who was the centre of the old-style family, to the mother. Despite the provisions of the legal code which reserves juridical authority to the husband, the mother has become the real master in a house from which the father, the legal repository of power, is frequently absent. As I have written elsewhere: "The family accordingly paired off in a way hitherto unknown, the new link being that between mother and child, the child or children she had longed for, never many, sometimes only one. Meanwhile the father image grew continuously fainter and exerted its influence only at a later, and increasingly late, stage."⁵

SO WE HAVE NOW ARRIVED at the mental outlook which we know so well but it is important to observe how recent it is! The general features which I have just outlined were already established in the first half of the 19th century—but primarily among the bourgeois and middle classes both in town and country. The old-style French family such as I have described at the beginning of this article, however, persisted for a long time among the lower classes. They were the true conservatives in so far as customs previously common to society as a whole were concerned, customs later abandoned by the rich and educated classes in their progress towards modernity. These conservative habits faded away and finally vanished under the impact of the progress of schooling.

The modern, Malthusian, closely-knit family concentrated around the child is linked to the school system, to the extension of that system (all children now go to school) and to the length of the schooling period (children stay at school longer and longer). In so far as the extension of the schooling period has been restricted in practice to the upper and middle classes it has consolidated family feeling and established the new concept of the French family. It may be said that, despite divorce, at no time in France's history has the family been so strong in so far as its private life and everyday customs were concerned as in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Things started to go wrong, however, when all this began to apply not only to the young of the

bourgeois classes but to the vast majority of an entire age-group which was kept at school and therefore in a state of dependence upon the family and in particular the mother. This has been a case of mass evolution and in the European industrial societies it has taken place with sudden violence over a period of less than thirty years, since the last World War.

THIS EVOLUTION has been both complicated and compounded by two other phenomena. In the first place, for reasons still obscure (but connected no doubt with nutrition), the age of puberty has become lower. Today we have boys growing beards and with deep bass voices at an age far lower than that of the beardless youngsters who could sing treble and dress as women in the baroque theatre of Mozart and Marivaux.

Secondly, for a number of technical reasons, the school-leaving age has become higher; many are still being educated at the age of twenty. The result is that the young remain longer in the bosom of their families, both materially and morally dependent on their parents, whereas biologically they are more precocious. Teen-age marriages do not reduce the inevitable tensions, for these married teenagers are not thereby automatically emancipated. They still remain divorced from true adult society and they find it even more difficult to enter that society, no doubt because they are now initiated into it so late. They are socialised when they are too old. They have lived enclosed within their families for too long; and the liberalism or even abdication of the parents does not compensate for the absence of real responsibility.

Here is perhaps the problem. I have attempted to suggest how, ever since the 18th century, *la famille* has become a refuge in an unfriendly and uncertain world in which the old strong social ties were continuously becoming looser. The question today, therefore, is: Is it a refuge or a ghetto, even a prison? What is the main role of the family today and how is it regarded? Will the young seek in marriage and a family a refuge from society including that of their parents, as has happened in previous generations? Or will the family now seem to them a constricting, semi-prison-like institution from which they must break away?

This is not a question which I can answer. Nevertheless, as a kind of conclusion, I would like to make two observations.

In the first place, the revolt against this present-

⁵ Philippe Ariès, *Histoire des Populations Françaises* (Seuil, Paris, 1971).

day French family is directed against those features which differentiate it from its predecessor of the Middle Ages and the *ancien régime*. Particular targets are the length of time that children remain at home, the consequent delay in their entry into life, and the excessive longevity of the couple due primarily to increased expectation of life.

The second point concerns the attitude to length of commitment. The two types of family which we have looked at both agreed that a family should not be dissolved before the death of one of the partners and even that (in men's memories and on the tombstone) it should be perpetuated after such a death. Under the *ancien régime*, as we know, there could only be physical separation (the initial meaning of the word "*divorce*"). In the 19th century, however, the indissolubility of marriage remained as an ideal in circles characterised as lay, anti-clerical, or even anti-Christian. Divorce and remarriage were allowed but only as a remedy for failure. The possibility of divorce did not change the standard pattern which remained that of Philemon and Baucis. Divorce, therefore, did not affect family feeling, never stronger than at the time at which divorce was permitted.

TODAY THE PROBLEM presents itself differently. It is not that of the bad start or initial error which must be made good by divorce and preparation for a fresh start and presumably a better one. The main problem is that of the longevity of the couple. It is evidently no longer possible to live together as long as Philemon and Baucis did, to remain happy in "togetherness" and to provide mutual support. In the old-style societies the desire for a *bonheur* implied that people should live to a hundred and raise a bevy of children. In the 19th century this changed (tacitly) to: live to a hundred and have a small handful of children, but children who would be handsome, gifted, and cut out for brilliant careers and good marriages. Today the pattern has changed again. Evidently for a man and woman to live together for a hundred years, even with few children, is hell. Undoubtedly this reaction stems from the hard fact that more and more couples do actually experience a prolonged communal existence. In the old societies the couple seldom lasted longer

than twenty years, the marriage being dissolved by that time through the death of one of the partners.

In the 19th century, however, people were already living longer. This was the European period which generated a hitherto unknown folklore based upon an expectation of life for the couple which might be exceptional but was becoming more frequent and more conceivable—the folklore of silver weddings, golden weddings, etc., and so forth. It is also worth noting that, although family feeling was strong in the 19th and 20th centuries, this was not only for the reasons connected with the children which I have already mentioned. It was also due to the fact that people had time to become deeply attached to each other; a lifetime was not sufficient. Recall the short duration of marriages in the Sologne in the 18th century, and Bouchard's comments on the difficulty of basing any really deep feeling on partnerships so fragile and ephemeral. Today, however, a lifetime, previously barely sufficient, may be regarded as something of an intolerable life-sentence.

ARE WE ABOUT TO REVERT, therefore, to a pattern by no means rare under the *ancien régime*—several families for a single individual? The similarity between this ancient past and today, and tomorrow, is not a deceptive one. Not so long ago—only about a century ago—we had actual and frequent experience of that which was the dream of the old days: Philemon and Baucis. To the extent that this hitherto exceptional situation has become ordinary and less tolerable, we are today coming closer to the threshold of the unbearable. The similarity between the two situations, however, is undoubtedly superficial: in the old days, as I have said, the couple did not live together for long since the marriage was broken up by death. Today the break-up of a marriage comes of the couple's own free will; not sudden death but long life is to blame.

Here is the essential note on which I wish to conclude because it governs our entire present-day civilisation. *On ne support pas ce qui dure*: that which lasts is out of favour. People have a horror of things that last. Durability is of negative value. So, in such an ephemeral world, how long will it take for even this antipathy to time to pass away?

Douglas Johnson

Dreyfus, Revisited

Letter from Paris

THE DREYFUS AFFAIR is a mystery. But a greater mystery is why it should continue to attract the attention that it does. This question is all the more relevant now that the affair has become the subject of two plays: the highly successful *Dreyfus* . . . by Jean-Claude Grumberg, which won the French Critics prize for the best play of 1974 and which has been equally successful outside France; and the less fortunate *Grand Manoeuvres* by A. E. Ellis, at the National Theatre in London (reviewed by John Weightman in *ENCOUNTER*, March). It has, still more recently, become the subject of a film, *Dreyfus ou l'intolérable vérité*, made by Jean Chérasse and currently running in Paris.

It is this "film débat" which ought to state most explicitly why the Dreyfus affair continues to be a major contemporary preoccupation. It was, after all, accepted rather portentously by *Le Figaro*, with the headline, "*Le cinéma rouvre l'enquête*." And one of the personalities who are interviewed in the film, François Brigneau (the editor of *Minute*) makes his position clear. He tells us that he has known many innocent men who have been put in prison, and he names Marshal Pétain and Charles Maurras; he has also known innocent men who have been shot, and he cites Robert Brasillach. In these circumstances, therefore, he regards the question of whether Alfred Dreyfus was innocent or guilty as a matter of little importance. What interests him, he explains, is how such a banal and ordinary affair was transformed into a kind of civil war, and how this same affair is still surrounded by a tumultuous concern. The producer, Jean Chérasse, dramatises his own position somewhat, when he talks of his own experiences, plunged in the "*souterrains nauséabonds*" of the affair, from which he has emerged a different man. In short, the Dreyfus affair has been given a good working over in this film, as in the two plays, and one ought to learn something from them about the cultural role which the affair now plays.

THE FILM is good. It has its moments of roughness, and those who are not familiar with the complexities of the Dreyfus case might well have their moments of confusion. Like many films, it cannot altogether avoid the obvious, so that we

are treated to irrelevant or useless scenes of the Dreyfus family tombs; of the rue de Bien-faisance where Esterhazy was staying when his name first appeared as that of a possible traitor; of Harpenden where he lived his last years in exile. But it is a bold and direct attempt at telling the Dreyfus story, at explaining the mystery and at discussing the significance of this famous *cause célèbre*. It could be described as a film which has the qualities of a television documentary but which also has the movement and the rhythm of cinema art.

The film approaches the subject in three ways. The first is purely illustrative and dramatic. Just as Michael Blakemore's London production of *Grand Manoeuvres* deliberately used the drawings of the period for some of the scene-settings, taking for example the famous Caran d'Ache cartoon of the family banquet which is destroyed by talk of the affair, so Chérasse gives us many illustrations, as well as photographs of the newspapers which were so important in the Dreyfus case. He has also discovered some of the film made by Meliès in 1899 when he started to dramatise the affair in twelve episodes, but which had to be abandoned because the first episodes caused disturbances in the cinemas where they were shown and were banned. He has also used some authentic news films of 1899, where we see the president of the military tribunal, Colonel Jouault, leaving the *lycée de garçons* at Rennes where the re-trial was being held; cavalry moving through the streets of the Breton capital; shots of Mathieu Dreyfus and of the Dreyfuses' lawyer, Demange. The effect of seeing these films, especially the Meliès (and to some extent the effect of the cartoons too), is to introduce an element of burlesque into a tragic story, much as happened in the National Theatre's production of *Grand Manoeuvres*, which had its military figures prancing and miming in a series of charades.

The same comic effect is achieved in Grumberg's play, which shows a group of amateur actors from the Jewish quarter of a Polish town, rehearsing a dramatisation of the Dreyfus affair which has been written by one of them. The time is the early 1930s but they know nothing of the true story, and when the author, Maurice, tries to

explain it, he meets with incomprehension. The cobbler, Michel (who is playing the part of Dreyfus), cannot understand how any honest Jew could ever have been a Captain in the Army. Zita, who plays the part of Dreyfus's mother, thinks that she must have disapproved strongly of him joining the Army where he would never be able to set up on his own. Michel cannot bring himself to play his part with any conviction; and in the famous degradation scene, when Dreyfus, with his uniform torn and his sword shattered, shouts to his fellow-soldiers that he is innocent, swearing on the head of his children that he is innocent, Michel repeats the lines in a dull, monotonous voice, without any feeling. The others comfort the producer, and tell him that Michel will be much better once he's got his uniform; but Michel explains that he cannot hold himself upright as a soldier should, because he's got to bend over his work.

IT IS CURIOUS that all these productions should bring out the comic and the ludicrous in the affair. There is a coincidence between these artistic approaches to the affair, and the conclusions of some modern historians, who refuse to recognise in the affair the same weighty gravity which had impressed so many of their predecessors. "*La tragédie anti-que*", as one of them has said, has been replaced by a "*mélodrama de boulevard*." There is some significance in this.

The second element in the film, and the most important, is the examination of the dossier. We are presented with a narrative of the affair, starting with the discovery of a document which supposedly lists the subjects of highly confidential military information which have been supplied to the Germans and which is always known as the *bordereau*; and we are presented with an explanation of the whole mystery. The film is able to do this directly, by using two historians who have written accounts of the affair, Henri Guillemin (*L'énigme Esterhazy*) and Marcel Thomas (*L'affaire sans Dreyfus*), while Michel de Lombardès (*L'affaire Dreyfus: la clef du mystère*) makes a briefer appearance. We are also shown two members of the *Action Française* who maintain

their belief that Dreyfus was guilty, and that wherever Dreyfus had served there had been leakages of secret information. But the greater part of the story is taken up with the fact that the evidence against Dreyfus was either non-existent or had been manufactured. The problem is to understand why this should have occurred, and why Dreyfus should not have been released once it was realised that the evidence against him was so flimsy.

SINCE A. E. ELLIS'S PLAY tells the whole story of the affair, it is interesting to see how he explained what happened. It is, in the first instance at least, a story of administrative rivalry and military incompetence. We are shown how the so-called Statistical Section (or counter-espionage bureau) in the French Army, feels itself threatened. The

most powerful officer in the Section, Commandant Henry, is particularly vulnerable because, not knowing any German, he should never have been appointed to his position. Then we are shown how the War Minister, General Mercier, is also insecure in his office, because of certain mistakes which he has made.

In these circumstances all these men were only too pleased to be able to seize upon the *bordereau* and make a rapid arrest which would demonstrate their qualities. None of them was in a position to admit that

they had made a mistake. Thus their apprehension, their weakness and their dishonesty create an extraordinary imbroglio. One stage in the cover-up leads to another, each forgery has to be maintained and new accusations sustained, the most fantastic rumours are spread. As a contemporary put it, "*tout cela sent le bureau, le sale bureau*." Such an interpretation is not far from that of those modern historians who interpret what happened as a series of mistakes which, once committed, could not easily be rectified. The suggestion, first put forward by a Colonel d'Aboville, that an internal examination of the *bordereau* indicated that the author could only be an artillery officer who had access to the different departments of the War Ministry, was the initial error which led to all the others. In reality, no important or vital secrets were com-



TABLEAU DE L'AMOUR CONJUGAL PÉPIN,
LE GRELOT, 1898

municated to the Germans at all. The affair is an affair about nothing. The Prime Minister, Brisson, who said at the time that in the Dreyfus affair "*il n'y avait pas de quoi fouetter un chat*", was speaking truer than he knew.

THIS INTERPRETATION is not unlike the view of other great moments of history which is taken by certain historians and which tends to emphasise accident, confusion, and incompetence rather than momentous issues and matters of vital principle. Thus the *Reichstag* fire, for example (we are now told), should not be seen as either a Nazi or a Communist plot, but rather the work of an isolated and crazy Dutchman, van der Lubbe. Even the first World War did not take place because anyone wanted it to take place, or because any great principle was involved. War occurred, some say, because certain military plans had been made, which plans took on a life of their own, and came to dominate soldiers and statesmen alike. A comparison between the Dreyfus affair and Watergate might well follow the same lines. In both cases an error of judgment, that of attributing the incriminating document to Dreyfus and that of authorising the break-in, was turned into a major scandal by the flurry of lies and irregularities which followed and which were discovered and denounced by a number of vigilant and determined men.

But it is difficult for anyone producing a play or a film to conclude that all the tumult is really based on nothing. Mr Ellis soon moved his interpretation of the affair on to a different plane; and in M. Chérassé's film, in spite of the fact that Marcel Thomas believes in the error theory, we are soon being asked to consider the conspiracy theories.

Many suggestions arise from the argument that since there was no real proof against Dreyfus, then there must have been good, though secret, reasons why people chose to believe in his guilt and sought to manufacture evidence against him. There must also have been some reason why, once it had been suggested that Esterhazy was the real author of the *bordereau*, a number of officers then chose to protect him while recognising that he was an unsatisfactory and unreliable ally.

One group of suggestions can be grouped around the "Third Man" theory, that the real traitor was never unmasked but that he was either in such a strong position that he could protect himself, or that the Army would have been too demoralised if they had realised his real identity. An off-shoot of these ideas is the belief, which was undoubtedly held by certain officers at the time, that at the end of the trail was to be found the most prestigious officer of the French Army, General Saussier, the military governor of Paris.

It was feared that he had behaved indiscreetly and unwisely. It was, therefore, in order to protect him that the trail had to be covered up and Dreyfus had to stay on Devil's Island.

Another group of suggestions involves double agents. One theory suggests that Esterhazy was a double agent, deliberately feeding the Germans with false information or endeavouring to discover how much the Germans knew about innovations in the French artillery. He was doing this possibly at the behest of General Mercier, or possibly under the instructions of General Saussier; but whichever it was, once the *bordereau* was discovered, Esterhazy could not be "blown." A further version maintains that it was the Germans who both manufactured and planted the *bordereau* in an attempt to discover whether Esterhazy was a double agent.

Yet another group of theories (which seem to have fallen from favour recently) revolves round some mistake of identity. Perhaps there were two Dreyfuses, the one guilty, and the other innocent, and it was the innocent who was arrested. (The solution of mysteries by the existence of a *doppelgänger* is very popular; and it has been maintained that there were two van der Lubbes, just as it is claimed that there were two Lee Harvey Oswalds; or that (in two celebrated East End cases) Steinie Morrison was convicted of a murder committed by his double, and that the identity of Jack the Ripper is confused because of the facial resemblance between the lawyer Druit and the Duke of Clarence.



COURONNEMENT DE LA CARRIÈRE,
FERTON, LE PILORI, 1898

BUT OF ALL THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES the most widely accepted hinges on anti-Semitism. It has been said countless times that people believed Dreyfus to be guilty, or that he was arrested without adequate proof, simply because he was Jewish.

This idea remains the major preoccupation of all the recent dramatisations of the affair. In Grumberg's play the author, Maurice, wants to show that even an assimilated Jew, a rich man and an Army Captain, is bound to have his problems. The beginning of the Ellis play shows four army officers reading the anti-Semitic newspaper, *La Libre Parole*. Even when no evidence can be discovered against Dreyfus, this is to be attributed to "the cunning of those Israelites." But Chérasse takes the argument a stage further. The climax of his film is his own presentation of the explanation, which he claims to be derived from the historical method of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre (and there is a somewhat unnecessary shot of him holding a copy of a Marc Bloch book).

Chérasse starts from the general context of international capitalism in the 1880s and 1890s and the German hope of acquiring the newly discovered mineral resources in French Lorraine. This is associated with the more general policy of weakening France, both by encouraging divisions within French society and by restoring the monarchy. All these policies, according to Chérasse, come together in the hands of Bismarck's successor as Chancellor, Caprivi. The result was a campaign (paid for by German bankers) against the Jews in France, and especially against the Rothschilds. It was enthusiastically supported by the French monarchists and by the Catholics, who had already showed their hand when they had supported the banking initiatives of Eugène Bontoux, the creator of the *Union Générale*. One aspect of this campaign was an attack against the Jews in the Army. An attempt was made to discover those Jews who might be expected to have successful military careers; and in this way Dreyfus, who hoped to become a general, came to the attention of Jules-Octave Biot, the military correspondent of *La Libre Parole*. He (it is claimed) also knew Colonel d'Aboville, and therefore Dreyfus was designated as a victim long before d'Aboville "analysed" the *bordereau* so as to draw attention

to Dreyfus. The anti-Semitic conspiracy here is formidable.

But this is not all. Chérasse brings together two supplementary theories. The one (derived from Guillemin) suggests that General Saussier was using Esterhazy as a means of discovering how much the German intelligence services knew. The other (derived from Michel de Lombarès) claims that it was the German counter-intelligence services which decided to test whether Esterhazy was genuine or not by forging, and planting, the *bordereau*. It was this which gave Colonel d'Aboville and *La Libre Parole* the opportunity of accusing Dreyfus. Because Biot had suborned other officers (including the War Minister, Mercier) as well, the affair got under way. Thus the German fabrication of the *bordereau* was the detonator which exploded the mines which had been laid by international banking interests associated with the French Catholics and monarchists.



LETTRE À EMILE ZOLA
BORGEX, LANTERNE DE BRUANT, No. 35

as is claimed, the author, Louis Létang, was a friend of Biot's). Nor has it generally been suggested, as is claimed in the film, that d'Aboville "recognised" Dreyfus's handwriting and denounced him immediately. There is no hard evidence which makes this theory more appealing than, say, that of the wrong Dreyfus being arrested.

What is interesting are two features of Chérasse's theory. The one is the attempt to establish a link between the details of this complicated, byzantine intrigue, and the more profound forces of history. The other is the way in which the wheel has come full circle. Just as in the 1890s there were many Frenchmen who believed sincerely in the reality of a monstrous Jewish conspiracy, so now we are asked to believe in the existence of an equally monstrous anti-Semitic conspiracy, involving a whole series of persons, from German statesmen and bankers to high-ranking French officers. There is an

IT IS, OF COURSE, EASY to point out that this interpretation, which is something of an amalgam of different theories, is short on actual proof. There is no proof that Dreyfus was the designated victim long before the *bordereau* arrived on the scene; and the fact that a newspaper published a spy story which anticipated some of the features of the Dreyfus case some months before, is hardly proof (even if,

analogy in all this. Those who condemned the Rosenbergs, for example, had a vision of a colossal Soviet spy-ring. Those who have written about them since have conjured up a vision of an equally powerful and sinister FBI or CIA organisation. The *causes célèbres* of history provide the opportunity to imagine how history is made.

THE THIRD AND FINAL LEVEL on which Chérasse's film examines the affair is also different from that of Grumberg and Ellis. For these dramatists the significance of Dreyfus is in his connection with what has happened to the Jews.

In Grumberg, there is the missionary who arrives and who talks about the Promised Land and about Zionism. He is not understood; but the arrival of two drunken men from the town who have come to beat up some Jews and who raise the spectre of a pogrom arouses consternation. It is Michel, wearing the uniform of Dreyfus and carrying a broken sword in his hand, who gets rid of them. The identification is made between Dreyfus and the Jews. It is made even more explicitly in *Grand Manoeuvres*, when at the play's ending, a pardoned and reinstated Dreyfus is decorated by the representative of the President of the Republic. His back is to the audience as he receives the accolade; he is called upon to speak but says nothing. When, after a pause, he turns round, we see that the decoration is that of the yellow star. He and his family take on the appearance of refugees and the darkened stage is filled with war noises. The destiny of Dreyfus is the destiny of the Jews.

These points are also made by Chérasse, more prosaically. It is pointed out that Dreyfus died in 1935. Had he lived only a few years more he might well have met with the summary justice and final solution which his enemies would have wished on him. It is chilling when we see his daughter explaining that her daughter—Dreyfus's grand-daughter—died at Auschwitz; and when we see documentary film of the concentration camps and hear a quotation from Sartre asking who will be safe if the Jew is not safe, the ending is stark and moving.

But there is more to Chérasse's view of the significance of the affair than a plea for justice and for racial tolerance. In the exchange of views

which he has organised by a series of separate interviews between such personalities as François Mitterand, Michel Debré, Maurice Faure, Alain Krivine and others, it is to be expected that there should be little agreement. Mitterand talks about the Dreyfus affair creating the first union of the forces of the Left in France and sees it as a movement culminating in the Popular Front, while Krivine maintains that it was a fictitious union because it was not based on class consciousness but on sentiment. Brigneau even asks why he should not be anti-Semitic if he wants to be. But the emphasis—coming from Mitterand, from Krivine, from Chérasse himself, and the clear implication of the whole film—is that the injustices which the Dreyfus affair revealed at the time are present in present-day French society. For Mitterand, "*les miasmes révélés par l'affaire Dreyfus sont en suspension dans l'atmosphère que nous respirons...*" For Krivine there will always be some racial victim nominated by society to explain events. As for Chérasse, he does not think that, were Dreyfus to be arrested today, he would ever be freed.

THUS THE AFFAIR, which used to be annexed by official republicanism ("How great is the genius of France!" cried Anatole France at Emile Zola's funeral) is now being annexed by a certain *gauchisme*. Justice can only exist on the Left, commented *Cinéma 75*, when it reviewed *Dreyfus ou l'intolérable vérité*. And in an interview in *Cahiers du cinéma*, Michel Foucault interpreted the spate of films like *Lacombe Lucien* as being a sign of the Giscardien bourgeoisie dissociating itself from Gaullism and from the Resistance, and he called for a cineastic revival of left-wing historical thinking. The version of the Dreyfus affair as a popular victory over capitalism, racialism, Catholicism, and reaction in general, is in line with this plea.

The fact is that the Dreyfus affair is not simply a jig-saw puzzle, from which some of the pieces are still missing. Nor is it, as is often claimed, a touchstone, which separates the good from the bad. One is tempted to say that there is not an aspect of French history which is not present in the affair. It can be understood, interpreted, or used as each generation or as each ideology wishes. To every man his own Dreyfus.



Column

COMING UP FROM down under from dinkum Aussieland, I was even more discouraged by the condition of our political and economic affairs than I had expected. Perhaps this was because I had broken the journey from

Sydney at Singapore, where everything testified to an exuberant vitality which put our own crumbling society to shame. The sense of shame was all the stronger because there, in Singapore, one is everywhere surrounded by monuments of vanished grandeur which are unmistakably the product of British work, enterprise, energy, imagination.

Sometimes these shadows cast by a fallen Empire have their absurd aspects. Conrad might have slept at my hotel, and perhaps indeed he did. But today he would have found it embellished with a Highland Bar and Grill, where the beaming Malays and Chinese who serve one are dressed in tartan skirts and jackets; and yet, one supposes, the dim cool atmosphere of the panelled bar, where white employees of merchant houses, banks, shipping and insurance agencies, sit around the tables drinking beer and gin slings, was much the same as it always was, except that, from a British point of view, the glory had departed.

Such a scene provokes complicated and ambivalent emotions. One is apt to forget the miseries and injustices, the intrigues and chicaneries, the oppression of one or, rather, several races by another, which went into the making of Singapore; and equally the fact that it was the scene of one of the greatest defeats ever suffered by British arms—and to discover within oneself obscure and almost forgotten feelings of pride that here, at this improbable crossroad of the seas, a people should have created such a magnificent memorial to its maritime and commercial genius.

For to the traveller, at least, in Singapore today capitalism seems to show its most acceptable face: in the immaculate cleanliness of the streets (fines of \$S500 for dropping litter); in the crisp white shirts and trousers of the inhabitants, as if everyone had come straight out of the laundry; in the teeming activity, as of some marine ant-hill, of the great harbour, mirrored in the sky above by a traffic-jam of planes queuing up to land at the airport. Somehow the idea, so alien to British minds today, that work and happiness are not necessarily disassociated, may even be inti-

mately connected, no longer seems absurd. Then again there falls on one a sadness that a people who created this extraordinary city, and from it impressed their image on an entire hemisphere, is no longer capable of managing the affairs of its own small island.

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PERHAPS THE SADNESS I felt in Singapore was only a part of my sadness in leaving Australia and New Zealand. I had never visited these countries before, or even been south of the equator, where everything is topsy-turvy, a looking-glass world where night becomes day, summer winter, and one is always standing on one's head, so that everything strikes one with the force of irresistible novelty and surprise. In Australia, especially, despite everything we have in common—a common language (on which nevertheless Australians play fascinating and delightful variations), a common history, common political institutions—one finds oneself in the presence of something profoundly alien, strange and mysterious. One would say hostile if it were not that the unfailing friendliness, hospitality and politeness of the Australians in their own country are so overwhelming that they almost make one feel at home even in their harsh and isolated and strangely beautiful land.

Perhaps they feel that, where Nature herself is so inhospitable, everything depends on human behaviour to make life tolerable. Or perhaps they share an inheritance from the early days of white settlement, when every stranger, though he might be a convict or a bushranger, was assured of food, shelter and a welcome for the night wherever he might be. On what other basis could anyone have possibly survived? But this friendliness and hospitality in themselves only help to emphasise the novelty of things, because they are something which is not easily come by in Europe or in Britain today.

Of course, one is wrong in thinking or in speaking of Australia as a country, or even perhaps of Australians as a single people. It is a continent, at once the oldest and the newest, and also the most isolated, with birds and beasts and flowers and plants (and human beings also) found nowhere else in the world, and stretching over vast empty deserts in which the survival of any form of human or animal life is at best problematical. One does not have to be there very long to become conscious of the immense distances which separate Australians from each other. The stock manager of a large pastoral company whom I met in Brisbane was responsible for a territory which stretched from Queensland

across the Northern Territory to Western Australia, a distance of some 3,000 miles, or about as far as London to Athens; and yet neither he himself nor anyone else thought this in any way remarkable.

Of course, the problems presented by these huge distances do not affect all, or even most, Australians. The overwhelming majority of them live in five large modern cities on the temperate and fertile sea-board fringe of the continent. Of Australia's total population of thirteen millions, six live in Melbourne and Sydney alone. These cities face firmly outwards, to the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. The interior crouches at their backs, like some huge sleeping animal, and yet its presence is always felt, as of something very ancient and hostile to men, unless perhaps to those of them who were born to share its primeval dreams.

THE TRAVELLER, CROSSING THE CONTINENT by air to Sydney, is conscious of this presence from the very first, because it is so unlike anything else he has met with on the long journey from London. As the plane crosses the coast and penetrates inland, the landscape becomes progressively more barren and arid, until finally, in the desert wastes of central Australia, it resembles nothing so much as some huge wrinkled elephant hide, stretched out as far as the eye can see, dried and scorched by a sun that has beaten down on it pitilessly for millions of years. A burned-out case, one might think, if ever there was one.

This great dead heart of Australia has a strange compelling beauty of its own; it is the landscape of a moon that has been consumed by the heat of a thousand suns, and its presence gives a curious sense of drama and grandeur to life in Australia, even on the marvellous sunny beaches of the coast. Australia is a natural disaster area, and one can scarcely talk to an Australian for more than five minutes without some mention of drought or flood or fire.

The Australian takes such calamities for granted, as acts of God or the inevitable effect of the harsh and hostile climate of the greater part of the continent. Something of the same attitude spills over into his reaction to economic misfortunes, such as he is suffering at the present time. Economic life, like Nature, has its ups and downs, and there is nothing much one can do about them; the Australian takes them with an easy-going, large, free-limbed optimism which assures him that the ups will always follow the downs, that however crook things may be at the moment, they will always come good in the end. They are all the work of the Goddess of Luck whom he worships (not least on the race-track)

and who has Australia in her care. *Australia Felix* is no mere form of words to him, but something which he feels in his bones, strange as this may seem to the traveller, who is more likely to be impressed by the catastrophes which seem to strike the continent at regular and not infrequent intervals.

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IN AUSTRALIA, it is always the improbable that seems most likely. Mark Twain captured this aspect of Australian life when he wrote in *Crossing The Equator*:

"Australian history . . . does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies. And all of a fresh, new sort, not the moldy old stale ones. It is full of suspenses and adventures, and contradictions, and incredibilities, but they are all true, they all happened."

In 1844, the great explorer Charles Sturt, who discovered the Darling River, and traced the course of the Murray to its mouth near Adelaide, observed the migration routes of birds at two widely separated points in Southern Australia and by triangulation calculated the point, somewhere in the undiscovered heart of Australia, where theoretically they ought to meet and cross. He convinced himself that at this point there lay some lush, green paradise to which the birds were drawn, and set out on an expedition to find it, but met with appalling hardships that broke his mind and his spirit and defeated all his hopes of being "the first man to set his foot in the centre of this vast territory."

Sturt never found his Australian Shangri-la, but in recent years the billion-year old pre-Cambrian and Cambrian rocks of the continent have provided even richer finds of iron ore, black coal, bauxite, copper, nickel, lead, zinc, titanium and other precious ores, which have made Australia a major exporter of metals and have helped to make Japan the third largest industrial power in the world. It is believed that the mineral resources which remain are even larger than those which have already been discovered.

It is these discoveries which confirm the Australian today in his belief that, despite accelerating inflation, growing unemployment, and the depression which afflicts his primary pastoral industries, Australia is still a land blessed by fortune and that the cornucopia of her riches is inexhaustible. They are the counterpart and counterweight to the harshness of her climate, the aridity of her land, and the natural disasters which the Australian has learned to bear with such amiable fortitude. They are a part of the

fresh new beautiful lies which all happened and which all came true.

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AUSTRALIA'S PASTORAL industries, her millions of sheep and cattle, have in the past provided the basis of her trade with the rest of the world, and are still an essential part of it; but today, as a result of the world economic recession, exclusion from Japanese and American markets, falling prices and rising costs, they are undergoing a severe depression in which the farmer finds it hard to make ends meet. Caught in the blades of the cost-price scissors, some farmers have been stripped as naked as their own sheep after shearing.

AT GOONDIWINDI, a little township on the New South Wales/Queensland border, I went to a cattle sale with the manager of a large agricultural complex, comprising sheep and cattle runs, a stud cattle farm, an artificial insemination centre, and 33,000 acres of wheat. Such an enterprise represents an enormous investment of capital and effort, and it is hardly profitable at present-day prices. I wish that those who look to Australia or New Zealand as sources of limitless supplies of "cheap food for Britain" would sometimes understand the immense effort it has required to develop their pastoral industries to the high level which they have now achieved. Cheap food is quite simply not compatible with their continued profitability; in any case, the Australians and New Zealanders have long ago decided that the role of purveyors of cheap food to Britain is not one they wish to play any longer.

Nevertheless, at the sale, my friend the manager, surrounded by stockmen and jackaroos on horseback, in multi-coloured shirts and jeans, bushranger hats tipped down to their noses against the sun, declared that he felt like buying some cattle that day; and so he did, two hundred and fifty of them, at an average price of \$A17 a head. Last year he was buying at \$A200 a head, but he explained that today he could not buy at anything higher than \$A17 and still hope to earn a profit. Yet, like every other Australian stockman I met, he was confident that this was only a temporary state of affairs and that, sooner rather than later, the good days would return again.

I do not know if such optimism is justified. But I hope it is, and in any case I found it refreshing by contrast with the atmosphere of stale and sour pessimism which prevails in this country at the present time. Australians may comfort themselves with beautiful lies, but at least they give them far greater confidence and energy in facing the future

than the mouldy old ones of which I have heard so many, since my return, in the great Referendum debate on the European Common Market which fortunately is now over at last. Any one returning from Australasia, and realising how completely Australia and New Zealand have accepted that they are, henceforward, Pacific countries, with their faces turned to Japan, the United States, China, South-east Asia, finds it hard to believe his ears when he is assured that, if only we were out of the Market, they would happily revert to the simple role of a low priced super-market for Britain; just as he cannot help being dismayed by the moral complacency (and from socialists!) which assumes that this is as things should be, a part of the natural order which ordains that Britain shall always feed cheaply at the expense of others.

THIS REALLY IS one of Mark Twain's "moldy old lies", and one is appalled that it should still be listened to. It appeared in a more than usually grotesque form in the Referendum debate when, in a television talk-in, Mrs Barbara Castle assured an innocent questioner that in New Zealand rain falls for nine months of the year, and that as a result there is no difficulty at all in producing all the food that Britain needs.

I remembered driving through Otago, down central as they say, in New Zealand's South Island, where my companion patiently described, field by field, all the effort that had been expended on making the grass grow greener and on bringing land under cultivation, and also the working of the newly-built irrigation system, which certainly increases the fruits of the earth but at a cost which makes many a farmer wonder whether he can afford to pay for its benefits. I should love to hear Mrs Castle explain to a New Zealand farmer, with that insufferable air of condescension which she adopts towards those she thinks her bourgeois-intellectual inferiors, that he really has nothing to worry about; all he has to do is to watch the grass grow and export his produce to Britain at less than market price.

I do not know whether Barbara Castle's remarks were based on ignorance or a cynical disregard for truth, and perhaps it does not much matter now that the Referendum debate is over. Yet somehow the fixed idea that the world, and particularly the Dominions, owes Britain a living (in the form of cheap food) is deeply rooted in British minds, both on the far Left and far Right. It is part of an Imperial mythology which has long lost any basis of truth it may have had; and so long as it continues to influence our attitude to the world we shall never wake up to the true facts of the prospect before us.

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AMERICAN CHRONICLE

The UN Follies

“What Have We Become? . . .”

By Elie Kedourie

*“Dominated by the lust of self
demolition . . .” —T. S. ELIOT*



IN THE AUTUMN of 1973, Mr William F. Buckley, Jr., American newspaper columnist and the editor of the *National Review*, served as a United States delegate to the 28th General Assembly of the United Nations. In a most readable work where he describes this experience, *United Nations*

Journal,¹ Mr Buckley recounts an episode which took place late one afternoon in the General Assembly. The Cuban Foreign Minister, Raúl Roa, was attacking the United States, and a number of Latin American countries. He was particularly vehement about Chile. Roa declared that he, “a simple human being”, wished to dissociate himself

“from those here who represent the bestiary and the forest. The henchmen of colonial racism and of imperial propaganda have tried to cast a curtain of pretenses, fallacies, calumnies, scurrility, adulterations and vile accusations to disguise their machinations, their felonies, their knavery, their infamy, their crime and their irresponsibility. That was also the clumsy intention behind the ridiculous, lying, petulant, cowardly and low so-called ‘I accuse’ of the . . . rented Vice Admiral, who dishonours this Assembly, bearing the stigma of traitor on his brow and his bloody garments after the murder of thousands of Chileans. . . .”

Naturally the Chilean delegate retaliated. He referred to the “tyrant Fidel Castro”, to his

despotic and arbitrary régime, and to his delight in watching public executions (“to which he even invited some diplomats”). This attack greatly incensed the Cuban Foreign Minister who moved towards the speaker, as though intending physically to attack him, and shouting “*hijo de puta*” (son of a whore) and “*maricón*” (a queer). Some Latin Americans moved to interpose themselves between the disputants and four Cuban bodyguards who had followed on Roa’s footsteps were seen poised to raise their pistols. A shoot-out, it would seem, was only narrowly averted. The next day, Mr Buckley tells us, there was a flurry of applications to the police for permission to carry guns in New York. “It would be illuminating”, he quietly adds,

“to know exactly how many pistols are in the General Assembly when all the representatives are at their seats. We have nowadays the technology to get the answer to that question, by a little discreet X-raying. Perhaps someone will suggest to one of those roaming cameras up in the newsroom behind the cornices that they shoot out an X-ray and identify the configuration of hand-guns among those gathered in New York to guard the peace of the world.”

The General Assembly was openly to gratify Mr Buckley’s wish. X-ray cameras were not needed to photograph Yasir Arafat with the gun peeping from under his jacket. The prophetic shot fired at Concord in 1775 was metaphorically heard around the world—but this other, ominous, television shot in New York two hundred years later was literally seen by the whole world.

The incident which Mr Buckley recounts shows at any rate that Yasir Arafat was only building on precedent. These unseemly exhibitions inevitably prompt a comparison between the United Nations as it is now and as it was meant to be.

ONE’S THOUGHTS GO BACK to the League of Nations—of which the United Nations is the heir—and to those men of elevated minds and exalted principles who devised it and spent their considerable talents in fostering and defending it: men like President Wilson, General Smuts, Lord Robert Cecil, and Professor Gilbert Murray. For these spirits the League was the long-awaited “Parliament of Man” in which quarrels were to be settled by public discussion, in which partial interests, however bitter their conflicts, would still be subordinate to the interest of humanity as a whole. Thus, in an article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Mr Philip Noel-Baker tells us of Lord Robert Cecil that, when Smuts appointed him as South African delegate to the League, he “persuaded his colleagues that all meetings of the Assembly and of its committees and of the Council should be held in public”, and that he “was a firm believer in the value of

¹ *United Nations Journal*. By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, Jr. G. P. Putnam’s Sons, \$7.95; Michael Joseph, £5.50.

public international debate, saying that 'publicity is the life-blood of the League'." The line seems direct and unbroken between the high-minded scion of the House of Cecil and the Cuban gunmen swaggering on the floor of the General Assembly. How did this come to be? What went wrong? How did the mass suddenly turn into a black mass? Or is it that in fact nothing at all went wrong, that from the very beginning it was all a terrible mistake, that "public international debate" had to end in the sinister glint of guns among the decorous diplomats, in Khrushchev thumping his shoe on the table, and in the vulgar abuse which Mr Buckley cites for our enlightenment and edification?

For the United Nations (as the League of Nations before it) is not a parliament, but the parody of a parliament. It does not come into being like a parliament and is not subject to periodical elections. It does not legislate, and it does not produce or support or control a government. The analogy with a parliament is at best very weak; it is misleading rather than clarifying. Of course President Wilson and the other League-of-Nations enthusiasts did not themselves invent this way of looking at, and dealing with relations between states. It is only the variant of a particular tradition of Western political discourse which, however adequately it may have summed up and accounted for some (very limited and very local) kinds of political experience, was dangerously ill-suited to the manoeuvrings and bargainings of sovereign states—those *monstres froids* as de Gaulle described them. How paradoxical, therefore—and how pitiful—that of all political idioms it should be this one, in the circumstances the least appropriate and the most misleading, which came to prominence in the era of Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, and their proliferating imitators and successors. It was a ruinous miscalculation. But at least there is fitness and justice, indeed strict justice, in Raúl Roa being the legatee of Professor Gilbert Murray and Lord Robert Cecil.

HE IS, OF COURSE, not the sole legatee. Buckley's *Journal* abounds in felicitous examples of "public international debate." For instance, the practice of the "non-aligned" nations to clear the chamber as a gesture of contempt for speakers from Israel, South Africa, Chile and (at that time) Portugal. Or the "total acceptance of the double line" which confers on the Soviet Union the freedom of "inveighing passionately against such practices as they are themselves most proficient in." Or again, General Mobutu, the President of Zaire who came to New York accompanied by 63 aides (including a lady-in-waiting for his wife, a maid, two valets, a radio editor, a T.V. editor, three

cameramen, a photographer, and a lighting engineer), and whose speech at the General Assembly received the ovation of the delegates. He entitled it "The Flame of Freedom", and bought an entire page of the *New York Times* in order to publish it for the benefit of "those who wish to contemplate its infinite significance in this time of world crisis." The speech inspired Buckley to publish an article of biting irony (which he includes in his book), describing how an aide to Mobutu placed his speech on the podium, and after he was done, retrieved it.

"General Mobutu [Buckley wrote] is an accomplished diplomat, as witness that he got much more applause than any other speaker, thus far during the session. It is a difficult art, diplomacy. But if you master it, you can say things that are received as enthusiastically as headmasters' jokes. General Mobutu doesn't like it that he is considered as part of the Third World, because the figure 'three' implies the precedence of 'one' and 'two', and Africa is greater than either the Western powers or for that matter Russia in any number of ways, mostly unspecified."

Buckley also reported another remarkable passage of the speech:

"The General explained that much of the so-called aid to African countries is an economic swindle of sorts. Consider, he said, so-called fellowship grants to African students. The grant is made, and the student travels to America, and spends the entire sum of money in America! In other words, the economic grant is really a grant to American educational institutions, not to African students. What is confusing under the circumstances [Buckley remarks] is why Zaire, having caught on to this Yankee shell game, doesn't retaliate by making huge grants to American students to study in Zaire?"

For a final specimen of "public international debate" consider the doings of His Excellency Jamil Baroodi, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia and "the most conspicuous figure in the United Nations." To him, Buckley tells us, "nobody, but nobody" ever replies. Buckley even wonders whether Baroodi and the UN were not made for each other. On any subject which engaged his interest he would talk at relentless and uninhibited length. About it he would talk before the Special Political Committee, the First Committee, the Second Committee, the Third Committee, the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Committees, and the General Assembly "until the nervous membranes of the entire body would shatter with the pain of it." Baroodi's engrossing subject is Israel; and *United Nations Journal* explains why, at the UN, this is a particularly obsessive subject. "It is", Buckley writes, "a source of great historical anguish, in the UN, that the dreaded and odious Israel was formed as the result of a United Nations resolution. Accordingly it has become necessary to establish that the United Nations was then under the domination of the

United States, that the United States was under the domination of Harry Truman, and that Harry Truman was under the domination of American Jews." This is Baroody's great theme, reiterated at great length and on every conceivable occasion.

THE SUB-TITLE of Buckley's *Journal* is *A Delegate's Odyssey*. While on his adventures, Odysseus, we remember, received from Aeolus a bag of wind. Aeolus should be the tutelary deity of the UN. But the prevalence of windbags is not as harmless as might be thought. Buckley considers that the rhetorical satisfaction which delegates get from presenting their views has a price, namely a poisoned atmosphere:

"One cannot survive a tense evening's debate in which, for instance, Mr Baroody figures prominently, without wishing that the United Nations' debates were adjourned to the Union League Club, with obstreperous members barred at the door by the steward. The question of course is whether there is an impalpable impulse forward, toward reconciliation, after one of those monstrous sessions; whether the sheer fatigue of it all works us in the right direction. Optimism on this point is less easy for a Westerner. The nervous system is a much more important part of our psychic make-up, and I can (myself) imagine giving up the debate, rather than having to spend one more hour listening to drivel. There is no question about it but that iron-bitted diplomats trained in oriental patience and conditioned to encephalophonic ideological indoctrination stand up better under that kind of thing than we do."

THE ENCEPHALOPHONIC BABEL which is the General Assembly is, then, not a parliament, or anything like a parliament. If such a comparison is to be made, lovers of "the comparative method" might like to display side by side the Security Council and the Diet of pre-partition Poland with its *liberum veto*. Such a régime Lord Robert Cecil's father described as "that ceremonious anarchy which was called a Government." It is doubtful if the adjective "ceremonious" quite fits the Security Council. But the parliamentary analogy is not the only one to have been thought of.

In a book entitled *United Nations: Sacred Drama* (1968), Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien has argued that what goes on in the General Assembly is a drama written by some Shakespeare of the theatre of the absurd and "performed in no coherent order by a motley cast, most of whom have forgotten most of their lines and mangle the remains of what they remember." Rather grandiloquently, Dr O'Brien affirms that the personages in this idiot performance "symbolise mighty forces, since the audience is mankind and the theme the destiny of man", and that the drama originates "in fear and prayer." Hence for him the United Nations is not only drama, but also,

more precisely, sacred drama. Knowing what goes on in the UN, we may well raise our eyebrows at this epithet. But, after all, "sacred" is an ambiguous word; vestal virgins and temple prostitutes were both held to be sacred. With this ambiguity in mind, we grant that Dr O'Brien's analogy is, when lightly handled, suggestive and stimulating (if quite tedious when pursued at book-length).

Dr O'Brien goes on to argue that a General Assembly resolution may constitute a "moral warrant" for a policy which the Assembly has no power to enforce, but which a great power may find expedient to execute on its behalf. The "moral warrant" theory, Dr O'Brien continues, "recognising a reserve of sacred authority in the Assembly, has explosive potentialities, like everything sacred." Rather high-flown language, but one can see what he means (or meant at the time). Explosive like, say, Lenin's oratory, or perhaps Hitler's speeches? But how did the General Assembly's "sacred" authority come to be established? Dr O'Brien rightly points out that between 1945 and 1958—when the United States had a safe two-thirds majority in the Assembly—U.S. spokesmen sought to establish the notion that, as a chief American delegate (Warren Austin) put it, the Assembly was "the moral conscience of the world." Dr O'Brien also explains clearly and concisely how the machinery was put together and perfected which at last enabled Raúl Roa and General Mobutu and Jamil Baroody and Yasir Arafat to stage their dazzling displays of "sacred" rhetoric:

"Rhetoric [O'Brien points out] has its own dynamics and the dynamics of a rhetoric which involves arguments of international law... are powerful and dangerous. The 'power of The United Nations', and in particular of the General Assembly, is the power to evoke such rhetoric and squeeze it towards action. The legal rhetoric of a great power is a commitment, though a loose one, and this is especially so of a great power in which a government, not in control of the press and other media, has continually to persuade its own public that it is doing the right thing. Once certain words have been spoken, the justifications, which must accompany future action or inaction, have been partly predetermined."

This passage notwithstanding, O'Brien seems to agree—and this in a book published only seven years ago—with the "often-heard left-wing charges that the proceedings on the East River are a puppet show of which the wires are pulled from Washington. . . ." If this is so, then we can only marvel at the wretched puppetry by which the puppet-master manages to be tripped up by the wires of his own dolls.

THERE WAS A FATEFUL MOMENT in what, echoing Hegel, we might call the dialectic of the puppeteer and the puppet. This was when Dean Acheson

conscripted the General Assembly to take part in the campaign against Soviet proceedings in Korea. It was then, as is well-known, that the United States instigated the famous "Uniting for Peace" resolution, and thus invested the General Assembly with the first rudiments of its "sacred" authority. It was, Buckley contends, "the dumbest thing" that Dean Acheson did. And it is, of course, true that the United States had absolutely no need of this demagoguery in resisting Soviet encroachments in Korea. But it is a moot point whether the prize for dumbness ought not to go to Acheson's successor, John Foster Dulles. For he it was who, for reasons still incomprehensible, chose to side with the Soviets, in order to hound and humiliate his allies the British and the French in the Suez affair, to the benefit of those who (on Buckley's testimony) now for their favourite sport regularly abuse, insult and pillory the United States. And it was precisely on the stage of the General Assembly that the sacred and primeval drama was enacted, and goats were sacrificed for the atonement of sins and the redemption of the world. In this ceremony the chief celebrant, the *pontifex maximus*, was none other than the Secretary-General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjöld.

Dr O'Brien leaves us in no doubt that in the sacred drama of the UN the Secretary-General is of central, pontifical importance. Indeed he goes so far as to speak of his "spiritual authority", actually comparing Hammarskjöld's career to that of Pope Innocent III. Hammarskjöld, the "high-priest of the shrine of survival", by meddling in the power-politics of the Congo, squandered "the spiritual resources of his office", exactly like Innocent III who grievously damaged the Papacy by the merciless war he had waged against the Hohenstaufen. Such an exalted analogy would by no means have abashed Hammarskjöld since he, on his part, expressly considered the UN a church, albeit a secular one.

WHEN HAMMARSKJÖLD first came to the UN the world was far from suspecting that such mystic yearning lurked behind his lack-lustre appearance. He seemed a thin-blooded functionary, whose life consisted entirely of drafts, memoranda, and compromise formulas. Nor was this appearance entirely illusory, for Hammarskjöld's dim, nondescript and ungainly official prose finally attained a kind of heroic distinction through its sheer nebulousity and utter impenetrability, qualities which seem to be required in one

who is engaged in squaring the circle and similar diplomatic games.

Azzam Pasha—who represented Saudi Arabia in the Buraimi quarrel, in which Hammarskjöld tried to mediate—may safely be assumed to be well acquainted with the obscurity and circumlocutions of Oriental chancery styles. Azzam, it seems, "appreciated Hammarskjöld's subtleties and shared his passion for delicate nuance, but even he" (Brian Urquhart tells us in a footnote of his copious and sympathetic biography²) "found the task of translating into Arabic Hammarskjöld's exact meaning formidable and very time-consuming." Urquhart quotes a sentence from the "long and complex" letter addressed by the Secretary-General to Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia which enables us to gain an idea of the style, all qualifications and tortuosities. It defeated Azzam's subtlety, even fortified as it was by the legendary resources of the Arabic language. In the course of this letter, Hammarskjöld suggested sending an emissary who might explore

"some general conditions—or some general unbinding terms—which might constitute an area of agreement."

General unbinding terms is too precious a locution to be lost to diplomacy (especially in these times of *détente*). It is interesting to learn that Hammarskjöld found in the Egyptian foreign minister Mahmoud Fawzi "a friend and a colleague with whom he could speak his mind on even the most difficult issues without fear of being misunderstood." This was clearly an elective affinity for Fawzi himself rivalled the Secretary-General in the power to hide his meaning or lack of meaning in layer upon layer of half-hint, tentative suggestion and hypothetical supposition, being, verily, able to multiply sevenfold Empson's seven types of ambiguity.³ It is thus a joy to watch these two virtuosi of the strategy of the indirect approach in action.

When the Israelis were pressed by the U.S. to withdraw from the Gaza strip at the beginning of 1957, it was left to Hammarskjöld to make interim arrangements for the territory. The fundamental issue was when, and under what conditions, the Egyptians would be allowed again into the area from which the Israelis had expelled them. The Assembly resolutions on the subject were unclear. When the Israelis evacuated Gaza the UN forces—the arrangements for which were anyway, appropriately and no doubt gratifyingly, "almost metaphysical in their subtlety"—took over. Hammarskjöld found himself having, as he put it, "to indulge very much in a somewhat extraordinary policy; that is, the policy of taking step after step in an atmosphere of great ambiguity." The Egyptians wanted to take over

² Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld* (1972).

³ For one example see my *Arabic Political Memoirs, and other studies* (1974), pp. 195–6.

immediately and the Israelis were opposing this vociferously, so that the Secretary-General, much as he tried, could not for long remain in the delightful position of being able "to slip around all corners and avoid saying whether the cat is white or black, because it was so dark all around." He negotiated with Fawzi, and the two friends agreed that the "initial" take-over of Gaza would be by UN forces. The beauty of the arrangement was that the word "*initial*" was to have "a completely indeterminate interpretation." It might be taken to mean that the initial phase "would last until the Egyptians 'raised their eyebrows'." Quoting from an unpublished document, Brian Urquhart tells us that when "Hammarskjöld said that a fairly long initial period might be needed so as to provide opportunities for an orderly settlement of some of the problems of the Gaza strip, Fawzi merely nodded." The percipient reader will not be surprised to learn that shortly afterwards—between a nod and a wink, so to speak; *en un clin d'oeil*, as you might say—the Egyptians were back, firmly ensconced, in Gaza. Hammarskjöld expostulated with his friend, but Fawzi (we are told) "answered this message evasively." Nordic mist had found its match in the Middle-Eastern mirage.

THIS MAN OF THE CORRIDOR and the back-room first made his reputation as a Swedish civil service economist. He was a Keynesian, a *dirigiste*, an egalitarian; one, that is to say, of the ancient tribe of the *mathematici*⁴ (a *genus humanum*, Tacitus said, *potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax*) who have come to enjoy much prosperity, influence and power by putting their black arts at the service of the leaders of the democracy, to enable them to bribe the masses by debauching the currency, ruining the public credit and vaporising private property (the euthanasia of the rentier, to use the so amusing expression which the Master with precious and brittle Bloomsbury wit invented, or shall we say coined). Hammarskjöld was, in short, exactly such as the great and the good delight to clasp to their bosoms.

Nor did he disappoint them. Very shortly after taking office he showed himself to be indeed a super-egalitarian and the very prince of *dirigistes*. In a report of December 1953 he spoke of a government's "basic responsibility to guide the

economic and social development of the nation", and went on to establish a parallel between "internal social justice" and "international justice." What he meant by this is made clear in a report of 1956 in which he asserted that "we all recognise that it is impossible within any nation today to defend for long an inequality of economic conditions which the majority of people believe to be unjust. What is a cause for unrest within a nation may become just as much a cause of unrest and instability in the international community." For him the UN was a first step "towards the establishment of an international democracy of peoples." We wonder whether it ever occurred to him that this would be no more than an international of people's democracies. Such predilections of course entailed Hammarskjöld being what is called an "anti-colonialist." In a passage characterised by a touch of acerbity, Paul Henri Spaak summarised the Secretary-General's record in this respect:

"His influence over the countries of Asia and Africa was undoubted. He consolidated it by not being always altogether fair to Europe and to whites in general. He experienced exacerbated and triumphant anti-colonialism. He participated in [anti-colonialism] out of duty, but also I am sure from conviction."

Spaak's mild, posthumous criticism is exceptional. During his lifetime the Secretary-General enjoyed enthusiastic public approval. Towards the end of his career, the Soviet Union attacked him quite harshly; but none of the Western Powers whose influence and position he strove to undermine so effectively ever raised their voice in public against him. On the contrary, the Western opinion-makers, in the media and elsewhere, joined in a chorus of eloquent plaudits and fond congratulations which the circumstances of his death caused to rise to a crescendo.⁵

All this, of course, was amply deserved. It was right and meet that a man of his particular talents and opinions should receive such recognition and reward. But Hammarskjöld was not one to enjoy in a straightforward, uncomplicated way, the power and honours which fell to his lot. He was a queer, uneasy, buttoned-up sort of man, all knots and complexes and inhibitions. Yet his exterior, which certainly did not show those "lineaments of gratified desire" of which Blake speaks, hid (to adopt an image which Hammarskjöld uses in a transparent reference to himself) tenacious Lucifer-like ambitions. The Secretary-General aspired, in the prophet Isaiah's words, to be "above the stars of God", "above the heights of the clouds", indeed to be "like the Most High."

AFTER HIS DEATH (in 1961) his diary was published under the title *Markings*. The diary Hammar-

⁴ The most modern and fashionable economists of course enjoy the advantage denied to Hammarskjöld and Keynes, of combining in their persons the two separate attributes which this word denotes, the mathematical and the astrological.

⁵ See, e.g., in *ENCOUNTER*, the obituary by W. H. Auden (November 1961).

a public stand in conflicts between its members:

"However [he sternly warned], the discretion and impartiality thus imposed on the Secretary-General by the character of his immediate task may not degenerate into a policy of expediency. He must also be a servant of the principles of the Charter, and its aims must ultimately determine what for him is right and wrong. For that he must stand."

Luther at the Diet of Worms. But Hammarskjöld was not put under the ban; he was patted on the back. The U.S. representative, Henry Cabot Lodge, described his speech (with proper awe) as a "major bomb"; and the French representative, Cornut-Gentile, said that "he appreciated both the motive and aim of the statement." Only the British representative, Sir Pierson Dixon, seemed to appreciate how near to the ridiculous attempts at the sublime could be, and to have had enough courage to confront the high-flown and high-minded Secretary-General. He told Hammarskjöld that he "wasn't playing fair." The haughty reply was that he knew what he was doing and that "it was hardly the moment for the British representative to be talking about 'playing fair'."

The streak of arrogant self-righteousness manifest in this incident appears even more clearly in an exchange with Ben-Gurion a month or so before. The Israelis were following a policy of retaliatory raids in an attempt to stop their neighbours from attacking settlements and the like. Hammarskjöld disapproved of this policy, and wrote to Ben Gurion:

"You are convinced that the threat of retaliation has a deterrent effect. I am convinced that it is more of an incitement to individual members of the Arab forces than even what has been said by their own Governments. You are convinced that acts of retaliation will stop further incidents. I am convinced that they will lead to further incidents. You believe that this way of creating respect for Israel will prove the way for sound coexistence with the Arab peoples. I believe that the policy may postpone indefinitely the time for such coexistence. . . . I think the discussion of this question can be considered closed since you, in spite of previous discouraging experiences, have taken the responsibility for large-scale tests of the correctness of your belief."

In the nature of things, it is quite impossible to say whether Ben-Gurion or Hammarskjöld was right. Is deterrence efficient? Is deterrence useless? Considered as maxims of policy both propositions can be taken to be valid on occasions; and this is one of those antinomies which must remain unreconciled to the end of time. But this is beside the point. In this exchange, the interlocutors were not on an equality. Ben-Gurion was responsible for the safety of lives and the welfare of a state; the oracle of the UN's 38th floor, on the other hand, had no responsibility for the safety of anybody: not even his own life would be in

danger if his advice were to result in catastrophe. The self-assured and hectoring tone is out of place; and the advice was, in all senses, gratuitous and, literally, impertinent.

IT WAS THE SUEZ AFFAIR which more than any other event gave Hammarskjöld such an exaggerated idea of his power and influence. The monstrous regiment of the 38th floor was based on the illusion (to which the momentary collusion between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. over Suez gave rise) that the UN could have a policy of its own. Hammarskjöld seemed really to believe that as Secretary-General he wielded some kind of power, personal to himself, whereby he could force the Powers to make their policies conform to his own view of what was good for the world.

In 1954, in a gloss on article 99 of the UN Charter (which empowers the Secretary-General to take the initiative in the Security Council when he believes that there is a threat to peace), he had declared that the real significance of this article was that it "does imply that the Governments of the UN expect the Secretary-General to take the independent responsibility, irrespective of their attitude, to represent the detached element in the international life of the peoples. . . ." "Sometimes", he went on to say in a remarkable sentence, "he will have to voice the wishes of the peoples against this or that government." These words announce the neo-Jacobin Club which Mr Buckley describes. In a speech of 1959, Hammarskjöld was even more explicit. He now declared that the UN had an existence and possibilities independent of the will and policies of member governments. These possibilities arose from the emergence of an "independent position" for the Organisation, rooted in the existence at the UN "of an opinion independent of partisan interests and dominated by the objectives indicated in the UN Charter."

Markings shows that for the Secretary-General *vox Hammarskjöldi* was *vox Dei*. These speeches indicate that he believed it to be *vox populi* as well. Dr O'Brien compared Hammarskjöld to Innocent III. The more apt comparison is to Boniface VIII—who claimed to be *judex ordinarius*, set by God over the whole world, and showed himself to the pilgrims at the jubilee of A.D. 1300 seated on Constantine's throne, shouting: "I am Caesar—I am Emperor."

Shortly afterwards, as is well-known, Boniface was to be manhandled and briefly imprisoned by the French King's bravo (shall we perhaps compare them to the UN's Cuban gunmen?). Boniface's estimate of the position of the Papacy was as mistaken as the Secretary-General's

exaggerated idea of his own power and influence. Urquhart's biography contains many examples of Hammarskjöld's defective political judgment. His intervention in the Lebanese disturbances of 1958 is a case in point.

These disturbances were the outcome of disputes among the political leaders, and between the communities of the Lebanon—disputes that were envenomed and exacerbated by the activities of the newly-formed United Arab Republic. Nasser, the President of the new republic which comprised Egypt and Syria, was at the height of his power and influence and he imagined that he would soon be able to control the whole Arab world. He therefore encouraged the Lebanese Sunni Muslims and other elements to bring down the lawful government. This was done by the smuggling of arms and volunteers from Syria. The Lebanese government complained at the UN and a United Nations Observer Group (UNOGIL) was sent to the Lebanon. Hammarskjöld, it is clear, followed his own personal policy. In public, he denied that the UAR was much—or at all—implicated. But in private, he asked Nasser to desist:

"The U.A.R. [he told Nasser] had overplayed its hand badly in Lebanon and had to change its course quickly. Military intervention must stop and the radio propaganda of the 'Voice of the Arabs', which was an open incitement to rebellion in Lebanon, should come to an end."

Nasser promised to stop the infiltration of men and arms into the Lebanon, and Fawzi confirmed the undertaking. But the smuggling went on regardless. When protests were made in the British press about Hammarskjöld's partiality to Nasser (and this, we now know, was the case) Hammarskjöld protested huffily to the British Foreign Secretary. He concluded his letter with a self-righteous and offensive rebuke:

"The straight line [he admonished Mr Selwyn Lloyd] often looks crooked to those who have departed from it."

The Iraqi *coup d'état* of 14 July 1958 compelled the United States to take immediate measures to prevent a dangerous deterioration in the Lebanon, and landed troops in Beirut. Hammarskjöld seriously believed that (as he informed Cabot Lodge) "as soon as the first U.S. ship appeared on the horizon all Nasser's restrictions on infiltration from Syria"—restrictions which in any case existed only in Hammarskjöld's own imagination—"would inevitably be lifted." And we learn from Urquhart that "Lodge himself seemed to be almost as disturbed as Hammarskjöld at the new situation"! A child could have told them that the landings—token as they were of a resolute U.S. policy—heralded, on the contrary, the end of the fun-and-games. It was at this

late stage that Hammarskjöld took a purely personal decision to increase the numbers of UNOGIL—a group which, whatever its earlier role, was now no more than the fifth wheel on the coach.

In comparison with the Congo operations on which the UN embarked in 1960, the Lebanese affair was "chicken-feed." But, as Dr O'Brien pointed out, UNOGIL provided a precedent for ONUC (as the UN Congo expedition was known). But in the Congo Hammarskjöld found himself completely out of his depth. The abrupt decision by Belgium to give up rule over the Congo released fearful passions and cupidities in the country. The U.S., the U.S.S.R., and God-knows-how-many-other states also found it expedient or necessary to involve themselves in the disorder. For the UN to hope, in the circumstances, for the independent role of Hammarskjöld's dream was simply chimerical. This is clear from the chapters which Urquhart devotes to the Congo in his biography; and the voluminous literature which has grown round the catastrophes of 1960–64, if it shows anything, shows the Congo of those days to be indeed that

*darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.*

In sum, no more need be said than that Hammarskjöld's legion, far from being master of the situation, was in reality no more than one of these armies; and that its commander, searching confidently for one knows not what, fell in an obscure, forlorn, far-away place.

THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS is the seed of the church. The seed has sprouted thick, tall and strong. And not only in the guise of General Mobutu and his retinue of sixty-three (was it really for this that the martyr offered up his life?). As Hammarskjöld would have wished it, the big subjects in the UN today are (as we learn from Buckley), "colonialism, sovereignty over natural resources, and the evolution of the doctrine that the have-not nations, 'as a matter or right', are entitled to economic help from the have-nations." The outcome is that (as Buckley ingeniously demonstrates in an appendix to his journal) the United States today is "the only superpower in the UN that has no functioning satellite." By what arts, by what stratagems we may ask, was such a booby-trap sprung, and how did the U.S.A. wake up one day to find itself caught in these coils?

The answer is that no arts, no stratagems, were necessary, that the U.S. was itself the unheeding author of its own discomfiture.

"It was done...[as Professor Moynihan has recently written] with the blind acquiescence and even agreement of the United States which kept endorsing principles for whose logical outcome it was wholly unprepared and with which it could never actually go along."⁶

The infernal machine began to be put together with the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, and was much improved at the time of Suez with the unleashing of the General Assembly against Great Britain and France. So that the United States—and any state it dares to befriend—is attacked, denounced, and vilified at pleasure. Ingenuity is not needed, only transparent sophistry. Any threadbare calumny will do since the U.S. is anxious not to offend, and even to join in its own castigation.

Mr Moynihan gives one or two examples of this absurd self-punishment. He tells of a UN publication, *The World Social Report*. This document proves that the United States is a less just society than the Soviet Union and the "developing" countries. This conclusion is reached by "correlating"—in familiar social-scientific fashion—"social justice" with the absence of public protest. The Report, we are told, is the most popular UN document. The U.S. did not, until 1974, protest against this travesty. On the contrary, the U.S. "actively participated in this sustained assault on American institutions." American help in, and approval of, such a document is attributed by Mr Moynihan to the fact that it was a Third World document and, as such, to be treated with tolerance and understanding.

There was an even more curious episode which took place at an American-financed Population Tribune meeting in Stockholm. Here Professor René Dumont of France accused the white man of eating the little children of the Sahel, of Ethiopia, of Bangladesh, by his "overconsumption of meat and his lack of generosity towards poor populations." This indictment later appeared on the front page of an official five-language UN publication, *Development Forum*. The results of this meeting so pleased the official U.S. delegation that they reported: "All basic U.S. objectives were achieved and U.S. accomplishments were many. . . . U.S. delegation unanimously pleased with final result." Mr Moynihan has no doubt how such a report ever came to be written. He attributes it to three decades of habit and incentive which have created in Washington "patterns of appeasement so profound as to seem wholly normal."

Things have come to such a pass that William

Buckley, whose term of service at the UN coincided with the last Israeli-Arab conflict called by some in the UN corridors the "Yum Yum Kippur war" is led to declare that if Israel had been charged with anti-Semitism, Israel would have lost. Buckley served principally on the Third Committee of the General Assembly which deals with "Human Rights", and a large part of his book is a very lucid and witty treatise on the fine art of proving that white is black which has been perfected at the UN. Such miracles are effected by skilful drafting, indefatigable oratory, organised and disciplined voting by blocs of states and coalitions of blocs.

IT WILL BE ASKED: does any of this really matter? The answer, is that it does very much matter to be able, for instance, to distinguish between everyday life in the United States and everyday life in the Soviet Union. Such distinctions are annihilated at the UN, which thus constitutes

"the most concentrated assault on moral reality in the history of free institutions . . . it does not do to ignore that fact or, worse, to get used to it."

On the evidence produced in his *Journal* this assault on moral reality is successful, not least because so little effort is made to withstand it. Détente is "in" right now, the chief U.S. delegate said in response to Buckley drawing attention to the "strategic gains we would stand to make by an undisguised, and undissimulated, constancy to ideals nominally promulgated by the United Nations." Therefore Buckley was not allowed to deliver a speech in which he wanted to say that "we have not heard more profuse compliments paid to the Declaration of Human Rights than by some who maintain huge fortifications calculated to prevent the exercise of that right." Nor another speech in which he wanted to declare (*à propos* the Fourth Geneva Convention regulating the administration of territories occupied by a state during a war) that "It is in our judgment as obvious that the Fourth Geneva Convention should be consulted in the Mideast as it is that it should be consulted in Eastern Europe." So sceptical Buckley is of steadfastness and stout-heartedness among those who speak for his country that he later wrote this passage in his widely-read syndicated newspaper column:

"I pray that every Jew in Russia will be permitted to emigrate. But I pray also that one (1) Jew will elect to remain, while pretending he wants to get out. Otherwise there will be a collapse of our foreign policy, of Congressional sanctions, and of our Army, Navy, Air Force, and probably our national anthem."

It must not be thought that the U.S. is the only Power in the UN which makes a habit of discomforting its friends and sparing its ill-wishers.

⁶ Daniel P. Moynihan, "The United States in Opposition", *Commentary* (March 1975). Mr Moynihan has recently been appointed chief U.S. Delegate to the UN.

The issue of "Guinea-Bissau" loomed large in the 28th Assembly. This was of course before the recent *coup d'état* in Lisbon, and the African states mounted an attack on Portugal and its friends, and demanded that a representative of PAIGC—the anti-Portuguese movement in the territory—should be invited to address the Assembly. The British, the French, and the Americans held a consultation on strategy. The British said they would oppose in the Assembly any invitation to PAIGC.

"They also said that they would vote in the Security Council against granting membership to Guinea-Bissau, provided both the United States and France did. This togetherness in the UN is very important. The British and in particular the French are anxious never to be isolated in any vote that might be construed as anti-African. The French are especially timid, and they gave no absolute assurances; the best we could get from them was that they would 'probably' abstain on all the votes—abstaining is the great cop-out in the UN. . . ."

True to his promise, the British delegate spoke in the Assembly against inviting a representative from PAIGC. But he—representing, be it noted, the views of a Conservative government—began by a rebuke to Portugal, an ally in NATO.

"My Government has frequently made clear, both in the United Nations and directly to the Portuguese Government, our strong conviction that Portugal should press ahead with all practicable speed toward the granting of self-determination in accordance with the right of, and taking into account the wishes of, the people of its territories in Africa. . . . We call upon the Government of Portugal to follow the example of those other colonial or former colonial powers whose former dependencies in Africa and elsewhere are now sovereign independent States represented in this Assembly. . . . It pains us that Portugal, a country with which we have so many historical ties, should be pursuing policies which we regard as misguided."

This sermonising emanated from the representative of a country which, as a farewell gift, endowed each African colony it had governed with a disorderly despotism or a methodical tyranny. Even if self-determination in Africa had been a shining success, these words, which were not a historical appreciation but mere political rhetoric, would still have been misplaced. As birds know by instinct, one does not foul one's own nest. But, as political rhetoric, such words were useless and even dangerous for, ingratiating as they were, they could easily—and with justice?—be dismissed as insincere, and thus attract nothing but the contempt of those they were meant to placate. It does not require much political sensitivity to understand this, and it is not lack of intelligence in Downing Street, or the Elysée Palace, which leads to UN delegates being instructed to speak in this way. No, it is not intelligence at all which is primarily lacking.

As it happened, Sir Alec Douglas-Home came to New York to address the General Assembly that autumn. He arrived with the reputation of "the toughest man in town on the matter of human rights", and Buckley arranged to interview him on his TV programme. The discussion began with the issue of civil rights in the Soviet Union, and the attempts by West European states (in the framework of the European Conference on Security and Co-operation) to secure some significant changes in Soviet practice. The *Journal* prints large extracts from the interview. Buckley quoted a speech of Sir Alec's: he had said that "we should do something" to remove barriers to the movement of people and ideas. Did this, he was asked, "mean merely that you should importune the Soviet Union to make these modifications"? Sir Alec hastened to deprecate this language:

"I think 'importune' [he objected] is carrying on rather the language of the Cold War, isn't it, which we want to get away from. We want to be able to say to the Soviet Union, 'Look, can you do this, this and this? If you can this will be fine because it will start to loosen up relations. . . .'"

But if this approach proved useless, would Sir Alec consider the use of sanctions? Sir Alec didn't think that "you want to talk in terms of sanctions. . . . I think you must use persuasion to the limit. If you can't persuade the other side . . . then we simply just revert, as I said, to a state of a passive sort of confrontation, which is very unsatisfactory." Palmerston's heir concluded the discussion by insisting that one didn't want

"to talk in terms of increasing sanctions because we want a response from the Soviet Union, and if there is no response, it is not our fault. We have made the offer; we have made the suggestions. If they turn them down, well, that's their affair."

WOULD MR GROMYKO or Mr Malik, we find ourselves asking, have fed this pap to Buckley's American audience? But we must not imagine that the Foreign Secretary was incapable of baring his teeth. Shortly afterwards (in a Parliamentary debate following the Yom Kippur War) a Labour MP, Mr Gerald Kaufman, asked Sir Alec if he "will not go to Holland and tell the citizens of that loyal and steadfast ally how he reconciles British membership of the EEC with the oil blockade Britain was carrying on against Holland." It was, no doubt, a partisan and tendentious point, but no more so than a hundred others which are the daily meat and drink of Members of Parliament. To deal with it—to pulverise his parliamentary colleague—Sir Alec hurled a thunderbolt:

"I am not sure that the words 'loyalty' and 'steadfast' come very well from the honourable Gentleman."

We remember again the wisdom of the birds and think how gratified, and perhaps even excited, Mr Buckley's audience would have been to see this admirable ferocity used against an opponent somewhat more dangerous than Mr Gerald Kaufman, M.P. for Manchester (Ardwick).

Pashas in Downing Street or sultans in the Elysée are responsible for the lives and welfare of great multitudes, but in modern democracies the responsibility is remote and diffuse. In contrast to what obtained in the older despotisms, the penalties of failure are, so far at any rate, neither drastic nor really unpleasant. Hence

*He that trusts to you
Where he should find you lions finds you hares,
Where foxes, geese.*

But the pashas of old, like modern commissars, had of necessity a keener nose for danger, and did not allow their leonine and vulpine instincts to atrophy.

DE GAULLE, that old sultan, described states as cold monsters. But what saved these monsters from being utterly monstrous was a fierce and touchy sense of honour. The sense of honour has its origins in the pursuit of, and the competition for, power. Involved in it is a jealousy for one's prestige, and a quick readiness to protect it from being damaged—whether by one's own actions or by the actions of others. Based on the pride of power, a sense of honour is, in a Christian

or a Kantian scheme, an ambiguous virtue, but it is a virtue all the same. The question is whether, both intelligence and courage failing, an atavistic sense of honour may come to save all these Western states, heavy with undreamt-of prosperity and luxuriating in their feelings of nameless guilt, from passively waiting for the destruction which, if it comes, will surely be in essence self-destruction. All this is to say how grateful we are to William Buckley for a work of intelligence and courage, a work indeed imbued with a sense of honour. It is appropriate that he should choose to end his book with the text of a telegram which Mr Daniel Moynihan, then U.S. ambassador in New Delhi, sent to Mr John Scali, chief U.S. delegate to the UN, in order to congratulate him for administering a rebuke to the Cubans for raising doubts about the legitimacy of Puerto Rican independence. Mr Moynihan described how he himself, when a delegate at a previous session of the UN, had

“sat in the General Assembly and listened to the Stalinist son of a bitch from Cuba go on about Puerto Rico. But still it was his job. He is a Stalinist. He works for a Stalinist. He can get killed if he makes a mistake. What drove me to despair was the complacency of our putative allies in this matter. The honour of American democracy was being impugned? What is honour? said our allies. Let us talk of malaria eradication, and aid levels. . . . In the end what troubles me most about the Puerto Rican episode is that we seem to be willing to forget about a clear violation of the Charter, a direct lie about the United States. What has come over us? Forget about a slander on our honour? What have we become? . . . ”

Fire and the Tide

Fire struggles in the chimney like an animal.
It's caught in a life.
As when the tide pulls the Tay out
scarring predictable mudscape.
Water's done knifework,
notching quick runnel and channel.

That's how you remember
the alternative lives.
You saw them, could never have lived them.
A ribbon of birds is pulled raggedly over November.
You're pulled between now and the way you will not escape.

Anne Stevenson

Clive James

To Martin Amis: a letter from Indianapolis

Mart, I write you from a magic spot.
The dullsville capital of *Indiana*
At this one point, for this one day, has got
Intensity in every nut and spanner.
Soon the cars will sing their vast Hosannah
And Pressure will produce amazing Grace.
Eagle-Offy! *A. J. Foyt's* bandanna!
Velazquez painting *Philip* at the chase
Saw something like these colours, nothing like this Race.

Ten-thirty. Half an hour before the start.
The press-box at the *Brickyard* is up high.
We sit here safely, Emperors set apart,
Looking down on Those About to Die.
“*Morituri. . .*” Yes, but so am I,
And so are you, though not now. When we’re older.
Death will be the last thing we defy.
These guys feel it perching on their shoulder:
The tremble of the heat is tinged with something colder.

That’s enough of talk about the weather.
To rail against the climate’s not good form.
My subject ought to be the latest feather
Protruding from your cap. I mean the *Maugham*.
I offer you, through gritted teeth, my warm
Congratulations on another *coup*.
Success for you’s so soon become the norm,
Your fresh young ego might be knocked askew.
A wide-spread fear, I find. Your father thinks so too.

The prize’s terms dictate an expedition
Overseas. That makes you Captain *Kirk*
Of Starship *Enterprise*. Your Five-Year Mission:
Exploring Unknown Worlds. You mustn’t shirk
The challenge. This Award’s not just a perk:
Maugham's £500 are meant to send
Your Mind in search of fodder for your Work
Through any far-flung way you care to wend.
Which means, at present rates, a fortnight in *Southend*,

So choosing *Andalusia* took nerve.
It’s certainly some kind of Foreign Part.

A bit close-flung, perhaps, but it will serve
To show you the left knee, if not the heart,
Of European Culture. It's a start.
Like *Chesterfield* advising his young son
(Who, I don't doubt, didn't give a fart)
I'm keen to see your life correctly run.
You can't just arse around forever having *fun*.

The day's work here began at 6 a.m.
The first car they wheeled out in *Gasoline*
Alley looked unworldly, like a LEM.
Mass was said. "The *Lord* is King." The scene
Grew crammed with every kind of clean machine.
An *Offenhauser* woke with shrieks and yells.
The heart-throb Dayglo pulse and Duco preen
Of decals filled the view with charms and spells
Densely drawn and brilliant as the *Book of Kells*.

PERFECT CIRCLE. "Let the *Earth* Rejoice."
"Christ Have Mercy." LODESTAR, OLSONITE.
America exults with sponsored voice
From *Kitty Hawk* to ultra-Lunar flight.
Uptight (FIRESTONE) and out of sight!
The *Cape*. BELL HELMETS. *Gemini*. *Apollo*!
Gatsby put his faith in the Green Light.
Behold his dream, and who shall call it hollow?
What genius they have, what destinies they follow!

The big Pre-Race Parade comes down the straight
While hardened press-men lecherously dote
On schoolgirl Majorettes all looking great
In boots and spangled swimsuits. Flags denote
Their provenance. The band from *Terra Haute*
Is called the *Marching Patriots*. *Purdue*
Have got a drum so big it needs a float.
And now the *Dancing Bears* come prancing through,
Their derrières starred white and striped with red and blue.

From *Tucson*, *Kokomo* and *Tuscaloosa*,
From over the State Line and far away,
Playing the complete *John Philip Sousa*
The kids have come for this one day in *May*
To show the watching world the U.S.A.
Survives and thrives and still knows how to cock its
Snoot. Old *Uncle Sam* is A-OK,
Strutting with bright buttons and high pockets.
Tiger Band from *Circleville*! *Broad Ripple Rockets*!

Objectively, perhaps, they *do* look tatty.
This Continent's original invaders
Were, however, positively ratty;
Hoodlums handing beads around like traders,
Bastards in tin hats and leather waders—
Larceny in every squeak and rattle.
The whole deal was a nightmare of *Ralph Nader's*,
A corporate racket dressed up as a battle:
People kissed the *Spaniard's* foot or died like cattle.

The choice between the New World and the Old
I've never found that clear, to tell the truth.
Tradition? Yes indeed, to that I hold:
Bouncing brats from *Des Moines* and *Duluth*
Seem short of every virtue except Youth.
But really, was there that much more appeal
In stout *Cortez's* lack of ruth and couth
Just because it bore the Papal seal?
It's Art that makes the difference, and Art means the Ideal:

Velazquez (*vide supra*) for example.
You're visiting the *Prado*, I presume?
When you do, you'll find a healthy sample
Taken from his *oeuvre* from womb to tomb.
The key works line one giant stunning room:
Single and group portraits done at Court
Whose brilliance cleans your brains out like a broom.
Inspired, yes. But products, too, of Thought:
An inner world in which the Kings ruled as they ought,

Not as they did. His purpose wasn't flattery
Or cravenly to kiss the Royal rod.
He just depicted the assault and battery
Of *Habsburg* policies as acts of *God*,
Whose earthly incarnation was the clod
Currently inhabiting the Throne.
He deified the whole lot on his tod,
Every Royal nincompoop and crone.
Titian was long gone. *Velazquez* was alone.

Alone, and hemmed about by mediocrities
(Except for once when *Rubens* came to town).
He must have felt as singular as *Socrates*
But didn't let the pressure get him down.
He slyly banked his credit with the Crown
Until he was allowed a year abroad
(In *Rome*, of course. In *Venice* he might drown.)
To raise his sights by study. An Award
The *King* well knew would be a hundredfold restored.

Conquistadores in their *armadura*,
The drivers now are standing by their cars.
Holy soldiers (but in purpose purer),
They look as if they're shipping out for *Mars*.
It's hard to tell the Rookies from the Stars:
Suited-up and masked, they seem the same.
Skin-grafts are the veteran's battle-scars.
For *A. J. Foyt* the searing price of Fame
Was branded round his mouth the day he ate the Flame.

Last year young *Swede Savage* swallowed fire.
He took six months to die. It goes to show
How hot it is inside a funeral pyre
And just how hard a row the drivers hoe.
I can't believe they're in this for the dough.
The secret's not beyond, but *in*, the Fear:
A focal point of Grief they get to know
Somewhere else a million miles from here—
The dream *Hart Crane* once had, to Travel in a Tear.

Eleven on the dot. The Zoo gets hit
By lightning. Lions whelp and panthers panic.
The fastest qualifiers quit the pit
No more than hipbone-high to a mechanic
And take the track. The uproar is Satanic.
Now the less exalted have departed.
Still the sound is monumental, manic.
Librarians would hear it broken-hearted.
And this lap's just for lining up. They haven't started.

Around the Speedway cruising on the Ton
(which means, for *Indy* cars, they're nearly stalling)
They blaze away like spaceships round the Sun—
Rolling thunder like *Valkalla* falling.
(I'm running out of epithets: it's galling.
I've never heard a noise like this before.)
Here they come again. And it's appalling—
The moment when you can't stand any more,
The Green Light goes! *Geronimo! Excelsior!*

Gangway for the New Apocalypse!
Racing at two hundred miles an hour
The likelier contenders get to grips,
Heavy cavalry berserk with power.
Three-time-winner *Foyt* already rips
Away to lead the field by half a mile.
Up the ante goes. Down go the chips.
Only *Rutherford* can match that style,
And he starts too far back. I'll tell you in a while

The way it all comes out, but now I've got
To set this screed aside and keep a check
From lap to lap on who, while driving what,
Chases whom or ends up in a wreck.
Half a thousand miles is quite a trek—
Though even as I'm jotting down this line
Foyt's got someone breathing down his neck:
Rutherford's McLaren, from Row Nine,
Has moved up more than twenty places. Heady wine!

Johnny Rutherford is from *Fort Worth*,
Foyt from *Houston*. They are Texans twain:
Each of them behind the wheel since birth,
Both of them straight-arrow as *John Wayne*.
What they're doing's technically insane,
And yet there's no denying it's a thrill:
Something fundamental in the brain
Revels in the daring and the skill.
The heart is lifted, even though the blood may chill.

SOME TIME LATER. On the Victory dais
Rutherford gets kissed and plied with drink.
It looks a bit like supper at *Emmaus*.
Outright worship's damaging, I think:
Standards of self-knowledge tend to sink.
I'd like to try it, though, I must confess.
Just a little bit. Not to the brink.
Nor would all that lolly cause distress:
Three hundred thousand dollars—not a penny less.

Half-way through, the prize belonged to *Foyt*.
His pretty GILMORE RACING ketchup-red
Coyote skated flatter than a quoit,
The maestro lying down as if in bed.
He only led by inches, but he led—
Until his turbo-charger coughed white smoke.
The car kept running quickly while it bled,
But finally—Black Flag. For *Foyt*, no joke:
Unless he had his money on the other bloke.

The Coming Boy on his eleventh try
At winning the “500” finished First.
A perfect journey. No one had to die.
Looking back, I think about the worst
Thing that happened was an engine burst.
The empty *Brickyard* bakes in silent heat,
The quarter-million race-fans have dispersed,
And I have got a deadline I must meet:
I have to tell the story of the Champion’s defeat.

Velazquez was ennobled in the end.
(*Philip*, fading fast, could not refuse
The final accolade to such a friend.)
His background was examined for loose screws
(Against the blood of craftsmen, *Moors* or *Jews*
Bureaucracy imposed a strict embargo)
And in a year or so came the good news,
Together with the robes and wealthy cargo
They used to hang around a *Knight of Santiago*.

Encumbered thus, he sank into the grave.
The Man is dead. The Artist is alive.
Lonely are the brilliant, like the brave—
Exactly like, except their works survive.
My point (it’s taken ages to arrive)
Is simply this: enjoy the adulation,
But meanwhile take a tip from Uncle *Clive*
And *amplify your general education*.
There’s more than Literature involved in Cultivation.

Tomorrow in the *London* afternoon
I’ll miss your stubby, *Jaggerish* appearance
And wish you back in *Fleet Street* very soon.
Among the foremost ranks of your adherents
I’m vocal to the point of incoherence
When totting up your qualities of mind.
You’ve even got the rarest: Perseverance.
A wise adviser ought to be resigned,
Unless he keeps the pace hot, to being left behind.

“We’re given Art in order not to perish
From the Truth.” Or words to that effect.
An apophthegm of *Nietzsche’s* which I cherish:
He sees how those two areas connect
Without conceding that they intersect.
Enough for now. Go easy, I implore you.
It all abides your questing intellect.
The Heritage of Culture, I assure you,
Like everything, you lucky sod, is All Before You.

Karl Kraus

And the Idea of Literature—By J. P. STERN

I AM OCCASIONALLY visited by a daydream, in the course of which the readers of modern German literature appear to be divided into two somewhat unequal groups. There are those who have heard a few dark rumours about an obscure Viennese journalist called Karl Kraus (a name of uncertain spelling), one of those typical querulous coffee house literati, who is said to have waged a peculiarly quixotic linguistic campaign lasting more than 40 years against his fellow-journalists (to this group belongs a colleague I once met who was professor of German literature at one of Austria's provincial universities). Apart from that, Kraus is known to this group only as the author of Austria's national anthem which begins with the words "*Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze/ Vor dem Kaiser unser Land.*"¹ And, on the other hand, there appears to be a group of purblind enthusiasts who read Karl Kraus and almost nothing else, and who receive from his work and the personality conveyed through that work an impression that dominates their every experience and evaluation of the world they live in. Since the first of these two groups always appears to be the

more numerous one, I had better begin with a few basic facts.

KARL KRAUS was born a hundred years ago, on 29 April 1874, in the little Bohemian town of Jičín, the son of wealthy German-Jewish parents who moved to Vienna when the boy was three years old. Some desultory studies at the university were followed by a brief but disastrous love affair with the professional stage. Kraus was of slight build and his appearance as Schiller's Franz Moor is said to have been ruined by outsize wig and ill-fitting costume. Thereafter he turned to journalism, writing literary, theatrical, cultural and political notices for various Austrian and German journals (including the most influential liberal daily of Vienna, *Die Neue Freie Presse*, which later became the chief butt of his critical attacks). He left all this in 1899 to found his own periodical, *Die Fackel*, which he edited for all its 37 years and 922 numbers.² Up to 1910 the pages of *Die Fackel* include contributions from distinguished contemporaries like Strindberg, Wedekind, Georg Brandes, H. S. Chamberlain, Georg Trakl, Else Lasker-Schüler and Franz Werfel.

From 1910 to its last number in the spring of 1936 *Die Fackel* was written entirely by Karl Kraus himself. It contains hardly a word that was not hand-written with that cheap wooden penholder and steel nib with which he covered the long sheets of proof paper which he received from his father's paper mill. All or almost all of Kraus's books take their origin in *Die Fackel*, which Karl Kraus once described as "*Vorabdruck meiner Werke* (first versions of my writings)." They include nine slim volumes of *Worte in Versen*, three volumes of aphorisms, seven volumes of essays of which the last two were published posthumously; two plays, the first of which, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (1922)³, contains the most massive indictment of modern war to be found in European literature; three poetic one-act plays; and a number of translations (among them Shakespeare's sonnets).⁴

¹ "May God preserve, may God protect/our country from the Emperor!" — a skit on the opening of the Austrian national anthem.

² Quotations from *Die Fackel* will be referred to in the text as *F* followed by number of issue, year (where it is not obvious), and page.

³ An abridged edition, *The Last Days of Mankind* (translated by Alexander Gode and Sue Ellen Wright), has just been edited and published by Frederick Ungar in New York.

⁴ *Worte in Versen* (9 volumes, 1916–1930). *Sprüche und Widersprüche* (1909). *Pro domo et mundo* (1912). *Nachts* (1918). *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* (1908). *Die Chinesische Mauer* (1910). *Weltgericht* (2 vols. 1919). *Untergang der Welt durch schwarze Magie* (1922). *Literatur und Lüge* (1929). *Die Sprache* (1937). *Die Dritte Walpurgisnacht* (1952). *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (1922). *Die Unüberwindlichen* (1928). *Literatur; oder Man wird doch da sehn* (1921). *Traumstück und Wolkenkuckucksheim* (1923). *Traumtheater* (1924). *Shakespeares Sonette* (1933). *Werke* (Kösel and Langen-Müller, both in Munich, 1952–64), contains 12 vols.

In a life so singlemindedly devoted to the pursuit of the literary calling there are not many major events to record. In 1899 Kraus officially left the Jewish community, and in 1911 was received into the Roman Catholic Church, which he left twelve years later. He gave 800 public readings, which included his own writings as well as adaptations of Shakespeare, Goethe, Nestroy, and Offenbach. A two-volume collection of his letters to Sidonie Nádherný von Borutin⁵ has recently given more than adequate publicity to the longest of his love affairs as well as to the fact that Rilke didn't like him and had little compunction in saying so. Though he was intensely politically minded, Karl Kraus kept no allegiance to any party and never held any public or political office. In 1915 he visited Rome on what may have been a private mission to prevent the entry of Italy into the War. In the early 1920s he waged a successful campaign against a black-mailing gutter-journalist whom he hounded out of Vienna; this was followed in 1927 by an unsuccessful campaign against the *Polizeipräsident* responsible for the massacre of 80 workers in the streets of Vienna (which incidentally did not prevent the man from becoming Chancellor of Austria). Kraus's pre-War politics may be described as enlightened conservative. In the new Austrian Republic he first gave his sympathies to the Social Democrats. However, in the early 1930s he bitterly criticised their ambiguous attitude toward the question of annexation by Germany, supporting the patriotic stand of Engelbert Dollfuss who was murdered by the Austrian National Socialists. Karl Kraus died of a heart disease two years later, on 12 July 1936, aged 62.⁶

His achievement is to be found in the pages of *Die Fackel*; it is there we shall look for the idea of literature inherent in what he wrote.

⁵ See George Steiner's review in *ENCOUNTER*, January 1975.

⁶ Biographical data in Paul Schick, *Karl Kraus* (rororo Bildmonographien, Hamburg, 1965), and Hans Weigel, *Karl Kraus: oder die Macht der Ohnmacht* (Vienna/Frankfurt/Zürich, 1968).



A GIRL CALLED ROSINA R., referred to in the Viennese press as "*die Private Rosina R.*", committed suicide on 13 September 1910 in a suburb of Vienna, leaving an estate of some 12,000 Kronen. In her last will she made provision for her own "funeral second class", bequeathing the bulk of her money—all of it her own savings—to the *Wiener freiwillige Rettungs-Gesellschaft* (Viennese voluntary ambulance service). In a comment in the March 1912 number of *Die Fackel* (F 344, 55–6) Karl Kraus pointed out that the famous charitable institution had been somewhat less than charitable. Having pocketed the legacy, the society did not think it appropriate to put up a gravestone in memory of the bene-

factress, although she was known to have "always wished for one." It was left to the girl's colleagues to start a collection. The reason why the society was ready to take the money and ignore its giver was not far to seek. "*Die Private Rosina R.*" had been one of those whose suicide was a routine matter, to be dealt with by Viennese doctors with the telling command "*Packt's es bei die Füß, lad't sie auf und schauen wir, dass wir wegkommen!* (Grab hold of her feet, dump her in the carriage, and let's be off!)" She had been a prostitute.

"*Die Rettungsgesellschaft . . . beeile sich!* [the comment ends] *Ich werde nachsehen. Ich werde klingeln. 2605. Ich werde rufen, ich werde mahnen, vivos voco, mortuos plango, fulgura frango!*"

vivos voco, mortuos plango, fulgura frango!"

"Let the ambulance hurry. I shall check on them. I shall ring. 2605. . . ."

The rest is a truncated quotation of the refrain of "The Bell", Schiller's most famous narrative poem.

A few days after this commentary appeared, the directors of the society wrote a letter apologising for the omission and promising to remedy it; this is followed by Karl Kraus's reply and a comment of the kind he calls "*die Glosse.*"

As we read these pages, what do we make of them? The promise doesn't appear to have been redeemed; in practical terms they achieved nothing whatever. They are not history, and what

they tell us about the *mores* of Vienna is interesting yet could have been said a good deal more briefly. Are they journalism? That seems the most obvious cultural category into which to put them. A local news column of 70 years ago is undoubtedly more interesting than last week's headlines. Yet when we actually look at Karl Kraus's "*Glosse*" we notice that the criteria of effective journalism don't apply to it. A newspaper reader's expectations seem to be wilfully disappointed. He is given few facts beyond the bare information I have outlined, and his attention to these facts is no sooner engaged than it is again distracted away from them and turned to the communication itself, to the piece of prose that is before him. The rudimentary requirement of journalism—what we call a fluent, highly readable style—is challenged, defied, and attacked. Readability implies an effortless rapport between the language—the linguistic uses and abuses—of the journalistic writer and his more or less passive public; the sort of rapport, in fact, which this text repudiates at every point. Moreover, every aspect of the relationship between the text and the facts, between language and world, is made explicit, is turned into an issue. Thus "*Dieser Grabstein steht bloss für den Anlass, der zu der Glosse geführt hat*", we are told. But the next sentence makes us wonder: "*Dass sie aufgehört hat zu leben, beweist er nicht*": since the pronouns are ambiguous—the first may refer to "*Glosse*", it is sure to refer to the girl; the second may refer to "*Anlass* (occasion)", it is sure to refer to the gravestone—a set of ambiguities which in turn make us wonder how seriously to take the claim that the gravestone was no more than the occasion for the writing of the "*Glosse*":

Er kann nur einer Beschwerde gesetzt sein, eine polemische Auseinandersetzung bestätigen und damit aus der Welt schaffen, nie ein Gedicht. . . . (This gravestone merely represents the occasion that has led to the comment [i.e. is a pretext for it]. . . . The former does not prove that the latter has ceased to live. It can only mark the end of a complaint; it can acknowledge the purport of a polemical argument and thus render it redundant; it cannot touch a poem.)

"A poem"—is that what we make of this memorial to the generosity of a prostitute and the hypocrisy of a "*Rettungsgesellschaft*" that couldn't save her? Given the connotations—not only for Karl Kraus—of the word "*Gedicht*", the claim is far from modest. The text certainly isn't what, at the turn of the century, was understood by a prose-poem, and yet we can see that it has certain qualities of internal cohesion which we undoubtedly associate with poetry:

Das werden nicht viele verstehen, dass die Beseitigung eines Übels nicht dessen Gestalt beseitige, die Erfüllung zwar den Wunsch, aber nicht den Anspruch. Um ihnen auch dies in ein Verständliches zu übersetzen, sei gesagt, dass die Möglichkeit eines Geschehens oder einer Unterlassung der Glosse auch dann den Atem sichert, wenn die Rede durch Zustimmung abgeschnitten ist, und dass das Übel bleibt, wenn gleich der Fall beseitigt ist. Die Realität kann nie in die künstlerische Gestaltung eingreifen und die Erfüllung dessen, was sie verabsäumt hatte, mag den sogar verdrängen, dem es so sehr um die Erfüllung zu tun war. Oder: Solange eine Beschwerde bloss Ausdruck des informierten Rechts bleibt, muss die Negierung oder Gutmachung den befriedigen, der die Beschwerde vorbringt. Das ist Sache des Journalismus. Ist die Beschwerde Kunst geworden, so gibts keinen Widerruf. Die Satire kennt keine Besserung der Welt. Darum werde ich weiter rufen, auch wenn man mich längst erhört hat. Die Glosse bleibt, ich bin nur jenem Niveau, auf dem der Anlass allein verstanden wird, die Mitteilung schuldig, dass der Ruf erhört wurde. Man nennt das "Gegenstandsloswerden", aber gegenstandslos wird ein Gegenstand schon durch die Auflösung in Satire. Das eben ist das Missgeschick aller Formung, die das Allerstofflichste auflöst: dass sich dieses wieder in das Werk mischen kann, mit dem es nichts mehr zu schaffen hat. Die Betroffenen haben wohl die Pflicht, sich zu bessern, aber nicht das Recht. Die Satire beleidigt nicht und kann nicht berichtigt werden, sie lebt, aber bereut nicht, und dass die Herren Opfer in sich gehen, ihren Beruf aufgeben oder gar sterben können, ist nur eine fatale Komplikation, über die man aber nach fünfzig Jahren glatt hinwegkommt.

A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH may serve as an explication. It so happens that the points at which the meta-language must use different linguistic paths to arrive at roughly similar ends are precisely the points of internal cohesion where Kraus's text seems odd because it moves away from the area of "ordinary" discursive prose. Thus the ellipsis of the German verb and the equally elliptical use of the words "*Gestalt*" and "*Ausspruch* (expression)" in the first sentence need to be paraphrased in a version that is bound to lose some of the succinctness of the original: "Not many will understand that the removal of an evil does not remove its form, and that the fulfilment removes the wish but not its utterance." The difficulty of the next sentence lies in the exploitation of the dative: "*der Glosse . . . den Atem sichert*": "In order to translate this into something that they too"—the many [who won't understand]—"may understand, let it be said that the very possibility of such an event or such an omission assures the comment of a *raison d'être* even though the argument is cut short by assent, and that the evil remains even though the specific case has been disposed of." What we have been offered so far is an antithesis between comment and event, expression and specific case. This is now widened into a metaphysical assertion and narrowed down into a mocking biographical admission: "Practical reality can never encroach

upon artistic creation" (note the neo-romantic ring of the phrase "*künstlerische Gestaltung*") "and the fulfilment of that which reality neglected" (note the Viennese redundancy of "*verabsäumen*") "may even vex him who was so much intent on bringing it about."

Or again: As long as a complaint is merely the informed expression of a right, its rebuttal or acknowledgement must satisfy him who made it in the first place. This is the business of journalism. Once the complaint has become art, it cannot be revoked. Satire recognises no improvement of the world. Therefore I shall continue my cry even though people have long since heeded me. The comment remains; only to that intellectual stratum which understands nothing but the facts that occasioned the comment, I am in duty bound to announce that the call was heeded. All this goes by the name of "pointlessness", yet a point becomes pointless the moment it is dissolved in satire. That, precisely, is the misfortune of all artistic creation which contrives to dissolve all base matter: the latter may continue to meddle with a work of art with which it no longer has anything in common. Those who are satire's butts have the obligation to mend their ways but not the right. Satire does not offend and cannot be rectified; it lives but rues not; and the fact that its esteemed victims may repent, give up their jobs, or even die, is no more than an unfortunate complication which in fifty years' time will be easily disregarded.

WHATEVER YOU MAY THINK of this passage—let me say that I myself derive a great deal of pleasure from its richness in cross-references and its high degree of linguistic and personal self-consciousness, though I can well imagine readers to whom these qualities mean little, but who will be irritated by its contrarities—there is no doubt that this is what Karl Kraus understands by "literature."

He doesn't pretend—and I think we needn't pretend—that this is a neutral, value-free term. For him, and perhaps for us all, "literature" connotes a certain imaginative achievement. For him, though not necessarily for us, the achievement lies above all in the intensity of the undertaking. In other words, literature is, for him, language at a high level of intensity and concentration. And even though it is true, as every critic of Kraus (including this one) has observed, that he never systematised this view and indeed abhorred all system, in politics as well as in ethics and aesthetics and in his reflections on the grammar and prosody of German, nevertheless he adheres to the idea of literature as language at a high level of intensity quite consistently and rigorously from the early years of the century to the end of his life—throughout all the 37 years of *Die Fackel* and the various books which grew out of its pages. The changes in Karl Kraus's style are not equally marked throughout his literary career. Yet its development is, consistently enough, towards an increased exploita-

tion of its characteristic devices, and thus towards an ever more uncompromising challenge to its readers. In this respect Kraus resembles Henry James: though their reasons are very different, each develops a style which offers an ever more radical challenge to our habitual linguistic expectations.

BEFORE SPECIFYING THIS NOTION of intensity, it may be useful to draw a parallel with a certain Marxist view of literature, represented for instance by the late Lucien Goldmann. Asked to define the difference between a literary masterpiece and its epigoni, Goldmann would argue that it lies in the degree of consciousness distilled and conveyed in each work. Consciousness, in turn, would be defined as historical consciousness, "*epochales Bewusstsein*." And historical consciousness, finally, would be consciousness of the process of dialectical materialism.

Thus, for Goldmann, the difference between *Faust II* and any of its contemporaries could not be gauged by a literary enquiry but would be measurable on a single scale of historical representativeness, a scale of more or less distinguished images of the consciousness of the "stages of production and exchange" in post-1789 European society. A liberal critic may object that such an interpretation is likely to be more relevant to the last act of *Faust II* than it is, say, to the Helena scenes in Act iii; or again, that a wholesale interpretation of this kind will do less than justice to "*Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*" or "*Es war ein König in Thule*", the loveliest of Goethe's lyric poems. He may be sympathetic and agree with the committed critic—Brecht came close to this point of view in the late 1930s—who argues that, in an era of fascist victories and capitalist exploitation, objections raised against a Marxist-materialist interpretation of literature amount to a betrayal of the cause of humanity and to siding with the enemy. Or he may be less sympathetic and say that hard times are no excuse for bad criticism. But in either case the liberal critic will be aware that the criteria of such an interpretation are primarily determined by ideological (as opposed to literary) considerations.

Karl Kraus's view of literature is largely to one side of any political ideology, yet it has certain important parallels with the view I have mentioned. The intensity which for him determines literary value is not a concentration of historical consciousness but of language—it is seen as a density of internal and external references which inheres in a given text. The textual unit is the sentence. The elliptical constructions and zeugmas I have mentioned, the imperious authorial assertiveness that determines the network of pronouns into

which his sentences are laced, the meticulous attention to semantic as opposed to grammatical punctuation, the analysis and exploitation of metaphors and etymologies, and again the semantic, meaningful use of puns and turns on words and all manner of word-conscious conceits, as well as the rich use of quotations—it is devices such as these which make for that characteristic density of internal and external references, and which are, for Karl Kraus, the hallmark not only of literary excellence but of literature itself. And this criterion he applies not only to the fashioning of his own prose and poetry and dramatic texts. This, too, is how he judges all (or almost all) writing.

IF, THEN, THIS INTENSITY of linguistic effects is the dominant criterion, a number of consequences for Kraus's idea of literature will follow from it. Chief among these will be a reduction of literary utterance to ever briefer genres. Preference is given to essays over books, to reflections and "Glossen" and aphorisms, to lyrical rather than narrative poems, to acts and scenes rather than entire plays, to words rather than sentences. Again and again the butt of his attacks are the contemporary novelists and their harvest of "entertainment literature"; and they include Tolstoy and Thomas Mann as well as a host of lesser names. The idea of extended, as it were single-purpose, prose passages is to Kraus incompatible with the dignity of a work of art:

Da ich infolge einer angeborenen Insuffizienz Romane nicht zu Ende lesen kann, indem ich, der in der Lage bin, sechzehn Stunden ohne Unterbrechung und ohne Ermüdung zu arbeiten, schon beim geringsten Versuch, mir zu erzählen, dass Walter beim Betreten des Vorzimmers auf die Uhr sah, was mich so wenig angeht wie alles was weiter geschah, in tiefen traumlosen Schlaf ver falle. . . .

(As a result of some congenital disability it is impossible for me to read a novel to the end, for although capable of working for sixteen hours without interruption and without fatigue, at the slightest attempt to interest myself in the fact that Walter entered the hall and glanced at the clock—which concerns me as little as all the subsequent events—I invariably fall into a deep and dreamless sleep. . . .)

His own criterion of excellence is very different, and he liked to express that criterion in a metaphor which is homely yet illuminating:

Es scheint mir überhaupt keine andere Wortkunst zu geben, als die des Satzes, während der Roman nicht

beim Satz sondern beim Stoff beginnt. Dagegen vermöchte ich von der Lyrik nichts höheres aussagen, als was mir ein Berliner Raseur, ungefragt aber bedankt, ins Ohr geflüstert hat: "Ja, der Bart hat's in sich!"

(To me it seems that there can be no verbal art other than the art of the sentence; whereas the novel proceeds not from the sentence but from the subject-matter. Of lyric poetry, on the other hand, I can think of no higher acclamation than a remark by a Berlin barber who, unasked but gratefully acknowledged, whispered in my ear: "There's a beard that's got some fibre in it!")

Karl Kraus's "*Theater der Dichtung*"⁷—that is, his 800 one-man readings of his own works and of Shakespeare, Gerhart Hauptmann, Ferdinand Raimund, and above all Nestroy—is a sustained attack on the whole business of modern stage productions dominated by technological gimmicks, star actors and over-producing producers, all of them concerned with everything but "their service to the word." Here again the attack is conducted in the name of the poetry (that is, the language) of drama. Pure creation is creation from language:

Im Drama bleibt die reine Schöpfung um die Notwendigkeit reduziert, sie [die Schöpfung] durch szenische Anweisungen und Behelfe für die reale oder vorgestellte Bühne zu stützen oder auch nur zu ergänzen.

(In drama pure creation is impaired by the necessity of supporting or at least supplementing it by props and directions for a real or imaginary stage.)

THIS KIND OF ACHIEVEMENT is an author's reward for his service to the language, that is, for his attention to its characteristic forms and qualities. And this service, this language-consciousness, decides whom Kraus will admit into his literary pantheon.

The list is not a long one. It includes Goethe's poetry, especially that of *Faust II* and *West-östlicher Divan*; a few pieces of Jean Paul; a page or two of Lichtenberg's "Waste-Books"; von Platen's sonnets and polemical poems (indeed almost any stick to beat Heine with); some of Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's prose (mainly their attacks on the bad German of their contemporaries). Occasionally Kraus makes discoveries like von Goeckingk, Matthias Claudius (not well known at the time), and his own friend Peter Altenberg; but these belong to a different kind of literature. Some of the grounds for inclusion or exclusion are certainly interesting. Kant makes his appearance in a memorable poem of Kraus's because of his telling use of "und zwar" in a passage from his essay *On Eternal Peace* (1795), whereas Kleist is out because his solecisms—his false genitives—intimate that priority of "subject-matter" over "sentence" which Kraus condemns in most works of art.

⁷ It is splendidly evoked in the German version of Erich Heller's Karl Kraus essay, in *Enterbter Geist: Essays über modernes Dichten und Denken* (Frankfurt am Main, 1954), pp. 362–5. See *The Disinherited Mind* (1952). Bowes & Bowes published the English edition.

Emphatically, Kraus is not a disinterested literary critic, and for literary historians he has nothing but scorn. His criteria are not quite as illiberal as those of, say, a Marxist critic (his inclusion of Claudius and Altenberg is less predictable than that of Platen). Yet his idea of literature, too, is largely determined by his historical situation, and occasionally he says so. But unlike the Marxist ideologists he doesn't pretend to be able to separate the historical from the personal. The historical, for him, is what it is to the extent that it is personally experienced. His view of literature, too, is existential in the sense of being a view of literature for his age, which is experienced as an age of decline.

The immediate cause of the decline is clear, for this is an age of talk and chit-chat of every kind, of rumours and suspicions which harden into realities more real than the reality of fact:

... die Presse ... Was ist sie? Ein Bote nur? Nein: das Ereignis. Eine Rede? Nein: das Leben. Sie erhebt nicht nur den Anspruch, dass die wahren Ereignisse ihre Nachrichten über die Ereignisse seien, sie bewirkt auch diese unheimliche Identität, durch welche immer der Schein entsteht, dass Taten zuerst berichtet werden, ehe sie zu verrichten sind. ... Bringt sie Lügen über Greuel, so werden Greuel daraus.

(... the press ... what is it? Only a messenger? No—the event itself. A communication? No—a part of life. It not only makes the claim that its reports of events are the real events, it actually achieves this uncanny identity which constantly creates the impression that deeds must first be reported before they can be committed. When it publishes lies about atrocities, they *become* atrocities.)

The language of the age is the language of the press, of Moritz Benedikt (editor-in-chief of *Die Neue Freie Presse*, of whom *The Times* of 20 March 1920 said that he “more than any other man was responsible for the downfall of Austria”),⁸ of Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere. To put the point briefly if obscurely: Kraus claims in effect that all newspaper reporting is a “perlocutionary” activity.

THERE IS AN ESCAPE from the present and, seeing that Karl Kraus is Viennese, it is into an idyllic past. The literature of this past shows none of the strains of linguistic concentration. Kraus's nostalgic love for the uncontentious, unself-conscious poetry of the 18th century and of the young Goethe, for the playful and harmonious prose of Jean Paul, for the lyrics of Raimund and

Nestroy, is an act of homage to the mode of literature for another age, and thus, implicitly, a less serene acknowledgment of the historicity of his own. Some of the “simplicity and spontaneity”⁹ of past poetry survives into the present in Peter Altenberg's prose vignettes, in a few stanzas of Kraus's own poems (though never, I think, in a whole poem), and in the language of the common people. Thus, in the most moving scene of *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, Kraus “quotes” the letter of a wife to her husband at the front:

“Inigsgeliebter Gatte! Ich theile Dir mit, dass Ich mich verfehlt habe. Ich kan nichts Dafür, lieber Gatte. Du verzeihst mir schon alles, was ich Dir mittheile. Ich bin in Hoffnung gerathen, von einem andern. . . .”

(Dearest husband! I must tell you that I've been unfaithful to you. I couldn't help it, dear husband. You forgive me all I tell you. I'm expecting another man's child. . . .)¹⁰

Conversely, Kraus tends to single out those aspects of the literature of the past which can be read as examples of linguistic intensity and concentration, even when (as in the case of his quotations from Matthias Claudius) such a reading is at the expense of the lyrical flow and coherence of a poem. Goethe's *Pandora*, read as a language-conscious work; certain highly-wrought sections from *Faust II* and (again and again) from Shakespeare, read (in the manner of a fundamentalist reading the Bible) as anticipations of the present; Nestroy's puns and turns and close juxtapositions of lyricism and invective—these are examples of Kraus's literary “historicism.” They are analogies, as it were, to the Marxists' view of 1789 or 1848 as anticipations of 1917. But Kraus's view of the literature of the past also recalls the view of the New Critics and the sort of embarrassed difficulties they had when faced with Wordsworth, Byron, and Dickens.

LITERATURE, Kraus believes, must take issue with the world of which it is a part. In the event, it is committed to being a critique of the press and all aspects of life that appear to be dominated and determined by the language of the press. Thus stylistic form—the linguistic intensity which derives from the verbal exploits and the self-conscious and language-conscious turns I have mentioned—spills over into content, the meta-language of quotation and critique is mode of writing and theme at once. Quotation is to Kraus what slices of social life were to the naturalists—what the interrelation of institution and individual was to the European realists—what nature was to the poetry of Weimar. Quotation is a major source of literary inspiration. Its function in Kraus's work anticipated the

⁸ Quoted from E. F. Timms, *Language and the Satirist in the Work of Karl Kraus* (Cambridge, diss., 1967), p. 161.

⁹ Heller, *The Disinherited Mind* (1952), p. 200.

¹⁰ Act V, scene 34 (*Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, Zürich, 1945, p. 622).

"documentary theatre", but went far beyond its present-day uses.

Kraus criticised the novel as a genre which is defective because it takes its inspiration not from "the sentence (*der Satz*)" but from "the material (*der Stoff*).". Quotation, however, is "material" and "sentence" at one and the same time. Its value is, as in music, that of a theme to which the composer provides the variations and orchestration. The quotation can either be negative, where its source is the press or the hostile world at large, and the function of the context (the orchestration) is to provide the sharpest possible contrast. Or it can be positive, where its source is not the enemy but an admired friend, where the function of the context is to set it off, like a precious stone—as in the poem "*Nach zwanzig Jahren*", which enumerates the list of the poet's themes and complaints:

*Geschlecht und Lüge, Dummheit, Übelstände,
Tonfall und Phrase, Tinte, Technik, Tod,
Krieg und Gesellschaft, Wucher, Politik,
der Übermut der Ämter und die Schmach,
die Unwert schweigendem Verdienst erweist . . .*

(Sex and deceit, stupidity, abuses,
Tone and worn phrase, ink, technology, and death,
War and society, usury and politics,
the insolence of office, and the spurns
that patient merit of the unworthy takes . . .)

Here the quotation points not only to "the insolence of office," but also to the spurning of Hamlet's "patient merit" by a public conspiracy of silence. This is literature in response to a man's perception of his historical situation.

BUT THIS IDEA OF LITERATURE is also a response to Karl Kraus's personal situation. I do not now mean his situation as a German-speaking Jew, though a good deal might be said about that great treasure-trove of homage paid to the genius of the German language by men of Kraus's background. I mean rather his situation as a literary man in an age and place tremendously sensitive to literary values and yet wholly uninterested in taking these values seriously outside the strictly literary and aesthetic sphere. Kraus was fond of quoting Kierkegaard's dictum (which, incidentally, I think is untrue),

"A single man can neither help his age nor save it, he can only express its decline."

And there is hardly a critic who hasn't used it as a motto for his observations on Kraus. The emphasis I want to give it is on the *literary expression* of the agony of the age, and on the ambivalent sense of satisfaction which is likely to be connected with that expression. Like Brecht, Kraus remains at all times an intensely literary person. Like Brecht and others, he is

apt to exaggerate the political and moral function of literature. On the negative side, he hopes for major changes to ensue from his attacks on the press as the most important political fact of his times. On the positive side, he insists on the "pre-established harmony between language and the spheres" of life, and designates language as a full analogue and unerring gauge of all experience:

*Welch ein Stil des Lebens möchte sich entwickeln,
wenn der Deutsche keiner andern Ordonnanz
gehorsame als der der Sprache!*

(What a way of life would ensue if the Germans were to obey no other command than that of their language!)

To hold the age captive in a phrase: this is the sustaining literary fiction of his work. It is the core of his idea of literature, the literary as it is the moral programme of *Die Fackel*. Just as behind the Marxist notion of historical consciousness as the criterion of literary excellence there lies an ideological concern, so behind Karl Kraus's notion of linguistic intensity there lies a concern for moral values. But there is a difference. The ideology can be stated in abstract terms and is then placed as an abstract schema against a work of art. Kraus's "schema" is language, a complex living reality which he sees as a thing incapable of schematisation. Ideology, we may say, is an abstract of life, language is a form of life. He sees language as a thing that can be neither exchanged nor translated, not a skeleton of moral prescriptions but a repository and source of experience. G. C. Lichtenberg's reflection about a language in which every lie uttered would amount to a grammatical howler is no longer merely a hopeful speculation but has become an encompassing literary fiction. Occasionally, when the fiction looks like congealing into dogma, Kraus frees himself from it by asserting its fictionality: "*Ein Gedicht ist so lange gut, bis man weiss, von wem es ist. . .* (A poem is only good until one knows who wrote it)"; and again: "*Die Sprache ist die einzige Chimäre, deren Trugkraft ohne Ende ist. . .* (Language is the one chimaera whose power of illusion is endless)".

THE CENTRAL THEME of Karl Kraus's literary undertaking, the theme of language as infallible guide to personal truth, is difficult to see in the right light. Critics have either followed Kraus's own thinking and accepted the idea of a "pre-established harmony" as self-evidently true; or else they have rejected it as a complicated sophistry not worth the trouble of unravelling. It is neither of these. The difficulty the theme offers is very much like the difficulty of Kraus's style, which some regard as exemplary and

"classical", and others, like Ludwig Wittgenstein, as tiresomely over-wrought, whereas it is neither: it is brilliantly individual.

That the idea of a "pre-established harmony between words and spheres" is immensely illuminating and that it yields a singularly forceful critical weapon is proved by the sheer interest of Kraus's own writings. To accept the idea as self-evidently true, however, is to be involved in a number of circular arguments and contradictions.

For instance: Who is to judge which aspects of language indicate turpitude, and which others nobility of mind? The critic with the perfect ear for the signs of turpitude and nobility in language. . . . Again: Why should empty clichés be heinous? Because they intimate a defective imagination. But we know that often evil men do evil deeds in spite of imagining their consequences, and that dullards with pen in hand can be harmless. And again: Seeing that the natural development of language takes its course through dead metaphors, Kraus's critique entails the ideal of a wholly static language. Whereas the resuscitation of a dead metaphor *may* be the source of poetry, it may also (as in Heidegger and Adorno) be an irrelevance, a bore, or a cheap substitute for valid evidence. (The influence of Kraus on the style of others has, on the whole, been disastrous.)

Kraus rejects mimetic literature, at least in the sense in which it involves some such activity as the translating of "Stoff"—pre-existent things and relations—into language; when it implies the "mastery" of language rather than "service" to it. But can such a judgment be other than adventitious? Linguistic intensity, as he conceives of it, is above all a deeply *thoughtful* way of writing—not a way which leaves nothing to chance but which considers and exploits and makes an issue of all that design and chance have contributed. That this may well be better than a thoughtless and careless way of writing is obvious. But is it necessarily preferable to stylistic disinterestedness, to a style that doesn't matter? Intensity and concentration are qualities of the texture of sentences: but texture is not value, nor is there a firm bridge from one to the other. Finally: "The whole man must move together", as they used to say in the 18th century. Why should we judge or pretend to judge a man by his language, *i.e.* by less than *all* the signs of his being that are available to us?

KARL KRAUS is a *moraliste*, not a moral philosopher. He has no systematic theory of language (a distrust, rather, of all system), nor even a

theory of the morality of style. His conception of language as a guide to truth and human worth is a literary fiction. All those troublesome questions about the validity of his central theme receive their answers once we see it in that light, for the truth-value of literary fictions is not abstract and general but concrete and particular. (Jocasta's call to Oedipus not to heed his inner voice because "many a man has feared as much" is part of her agonised suasion, not of Freudian theory.) And to see "the pre-established harmony" as a fiction, a *literary theme*, is to acknowledge its historicity, its being grounded in an age other than our own, and deriving from that fact part of the appeal it has for us. To call it a fiction is in no way to abrogate its significance. To see it as a game even—

*Wenn ich so weiter fortspiel',
vor solchem kühnen Zaudern
wird es die Nachwelt schaudern.
Denn alles war im Wortspiel.*

is also to see it as a fate:

*Was leicht mir in den Schoss fiel,
wie schwer muss ich's erwerben,
bang vor des Worts Verderben.
O dass mir dieses Los fiel!*

(At this game that I play
of audacious hesitations
posterity will shudder
for the whole world's in a pun.

So easily acquired
was what I gained the hard way,
fearing the word's corruption.
Why did this lot befall me!)¹¹

It is therefore an undertaking to which a whole life is committed. The difficulty, then, is not that it is "*only* a fiction"; but that it is so very different from others. Where it is saying, "Language is the only guide", it is saying so as part of the literary demolition of an irresponsible Minister of War—not as part of a theory of psycho-linguistics. Where it is castigating the defective imagination and its use of clichés, the fiction acts as a *roman à clef*. Drawing upon the "reality which can never encroach upon artistic creation", it invents its villains and gives them "real" names, and challenges "reality" from "the impregnable stronghold of the world"—

*In sprachverfallnen Zeiten
im sichern Satzbau wohnen
(To dwell, when words are ruined,
safe in true sentence structures.)*

—knowing full well that nothing could be more precarious and ineffective than such a challenge in the face of the increasing barbarity of the ages. *Die Macht der Ohnmacht*, the accurate subtitle of Hans Weigel's study of Karl Kraus (1968), acknowledges the paradox that the powerlessnesses.

¹¹ *Worte in Versen in Werke*, vol. vii, ed. Heinrich Fischer (München, 1959), "Abenteuer der Arbeit", pp. 66-7 (originally in *Worte in Versen*, vol. ii, 1917).

of the literary man is indeed a great power, but only in a world that is prepared, in some measure, to acknowledge that power and respond to it. In 1933 another world awoke:

*Man frage nicht, was all die Zeit ich machte.
Ich bleibe stumm;
und sage nicht, warum.
Und Stille gab es, da die Erde krachte.
Kein Wort, das traf;
man spricht nur aus dem Schlaf.
Und träumt von einer Sonne, welche lachte.
Es geht vorbei;
Nachher war's einerlei.
Das Wort entschlief, als jene Welt erwachte.*

(Let no one ask how all my time was spent.
I shall be silent and
not tell the reason why.
And there was stillness when the earth exploded.
No words would fit.
I speak but in my sleep,
dream of a sun that smiled.
This too will pass,
later it's all the same.
The word departed when that world awoke.)

"Gott, wer darf sagen: schlimmer kann's nicht werden? S'ist schlimmer nun als je": it was the end, though he was still to say, "This is the end."

The number of *Die Fackel* containing the poem I have just quoted appeared in October 1933, together with the text of Karl Kraus's brief oration at the graveside of his (and Wittgenstein's) friend, the architect Adolf Loos. Two numbers later a very long essay, "*Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint*", repudiated the suggestion that in Hitler's world there could be room for literature of any kind. Was that world, then, incapable of being realised in literature at all? The masterpiece of Karl Kraus's last phase, *Die Dritte Walpurgisnacht*, in which the attempt is made, remained unpublished: he had spoken, yet he remained silent. Written in the spring and early summer of 1933, it was set up and corrected by him during the autumn of that year; but afraid that it might lead to reprisals against Jews and political prisoners in Germany and add fuel to the propaganda against Austria, he decided not to print it in *Die Fackel*. It was published for the first time in volume I of the Kösel edition in 1952.

"ON HITLER I have nothing to say—(*Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein*)"—the essay of over 300 pages begins with these words. It has no subdivisions,¹² and (as always in Kraus's prose) very few paragraphs. The solid pages of print are interrupted only now and again by quotations,

¹² This is how Karl Kraus had it set. The text from which I shall quote is edited by Heinrich Fischer who explains his decision to introduce divisions. See: *Die Dritte Walpurgisnacht: Werke* (München, 1952), p. 309.

set in small type, from the daily press and from his poetic sources; again, *Die Dritte Walpurgisnacht* is difficult to place in terms of accepted genres. To read it is no less exacting an adventure than to read any of Kraus's prose, but the language-conscious and (as it were) self-regarding element is less prominent. The linguistic reality that is being illuminated is that of the Third Reich, and the analysis of evil words not only intimates but is joined by an enumeration and direct description of evil deeds. The essay can hardly be called history in any accepted sense, if only because it makes no attempt to see senseless evil in a detached perspective.

Is it a prose-poem? Could there be anything so absurd as a prose poem on the subject of Germany in the Spring of 1933, when girls with shaved heads were whipped through the streets of all the towns and cities with inscriptions round their necks saying "*Ich habe mich einem Juden hergegeben* (I gave myself to a Jew)"; when men were made to recite, "*Wo hab ich denn die blauen Augen her? Von der SA. Sie gibt noch mehr* (Where did I get my lovely black eye? From the SA, and there's more where that came from)"; when others were reported to have fallen out of third-floor windows as a consequence of heart-failure; and when one-half of those who might have been expected to unite against the common enemy tried to appease and flatter him instead, and the other half was only worried about entering alliances which might one day turn out to be inexpedient. . . .

It is hard to think of material that fulfils more completely the description of "*das Allerstofflichste*" of which Karl Kraus had spoken in his "*Glosse*" of 30 years before, to think of material more unpromising for the purpose of literary composition. And yet: if there is a literary document which bodies forth for us the atmosphere of Germany in the Spring of 1933, as *Bleak House* bodies forth the City of London in the 1840s, or *War and Peace* Moscow in 1812; or John Dos Passos's *USA* collage portrays New York—if there can be a literary monument to the rise of Hitler and the decline of sanity in Germany, it is Kraus's scenario and no other single work.

But my comparisons are misleading. Since of course the "material" is entirely different from that of the novels I have mentioned—those novels being concerned mainly with the presentation of living people; whereas what Kraus is presenting are voices and faces and speeches and phrases, but not identifiable men and women (or, rather, men and women who, either as executioners or as victims, have ceased to be individually identifiable)—therefore the literary means used are entirely different too.

The structure of this strange monument is determined by a number of *leitmotifs*. Some of them—like the name of Gottfried Benn, or words like “blood”, an advertisement for a brand of cheese, or again a collage of initials (NSDAP, SA, SS, NSOB . . . to which the only response is SOS) and abbreviations (“*wenn die Gestapo, die Fepo oder die Uschla eingreift*”)—are repeated at various points throughout the essay in elucidation of such topics as the “primitive” nature of National Socialism, its “historic” and “German” mission, its “metaphysical” appeal. The same is true of the various ways in which the fate of the victims is presented—their suffering as well as their desperate attempts to placate the gangsters and to convince them of their own (e.g. the Jews’) German patriotism. Again, the argument is carried forward by a series of representative quotations—from the Austrian Social Democratic party press:

Diese seltsame Situation, dass eine unverändert grosse Partei zeitweilig aufgehört hat, eine mächtige Partei zu sein, macht sich psychologisch sehr stark fühlbar (What continues to be a great party has ceased, for the present, to be a powerful party—this is the strange situation which is making itself felt as a strong psychological factor)

and from the daily German press:

es handelt sich garnicht um Regierungsformen, sondern um eine neue Vision von der Geburt des Menschen (It is not forms of government that are at issue, but a new vision of the rebirth of man). . . .

die Greuelpropaganda ist Lügenpropaganda und wird von selbst in nichts zerfallen durch die Kraft der Wahrheit (These atrocity stories are propaganda founded on lies, and will disintegrate of their own accord through the might of truth). . . .

irrational heisst schöpfungsfähig und schöpfungsnah (irrational means creative and close to creation). . . .

er ist an Herzschwäche gestorben und war übrigens staatenlos (He died of heart failure and was in any case stateless). . . .

the language of Martin Heidegger:

die geistige Macht des Volkes ist die Macht seiner erd- und bluthaften Kräfte als Macht der innersten Erregung und weitesten Erschütterung des Daseins (the spiritual power of the nation is the power of its chthonic and blood-determined energies as a power of the innermost excitation and all-encompassing convulsion of existence). . . .

¹³ More in sorrow than in anger, Felix Salten, the author of the Viennese equivalent of *Fanny Hill*—and president of the Austrian PEN Club—appeals to his contemporaries to respond to Hitler and his henchmen in the spirit of Goethe’s poem “*An den Mond*”: “Blessed is he who shuts himself off from the world without hatred. . . . To shut oneself off from the world, from the present-day world . . . but without hatred. Above all without hatred!”

of Gottfried Benn:

*Wer wäre ich, mich auszuschliessen, weiss ich denn etwas Besseres—nein!
Volk ist viel!
Volk!!
(Who then am I to stand aloof, do I know of anything better?—No!
The nation is a great thing!
The nation!!)*

and of his colleague Hans-Heinz Ewers:

*“Javal” bereitet mir viel Behagen.
Ich brauch es schon seit vielen Tagen
Zu stärken meinen blonden Schopf
Zu erfrischen meinen Dichterkopf
 (“Javal” shampoo is the one for me
I use it often and regularly
to strengthen my blond curly hair
and make my poet’s head look fair. . . .
[This last quotation was the patriotic contribution of a leading Party poet])*

the language of conciliation (by the creator of “Josefine Mutzenbacher” and Walt Disney’s *Bambi*):

*“Selig, wer sich vor der Welt ohne Hass verschliesst. . . .” Sich vor der Welt, vor der jetzigen Welt, verschliessen . . . aber ohne Hass. Vor allem Hass!*¹³

and the language of diplomacy:

Wie denn auch das ganze deutsche Volk nur das eine hohe Ziel kennt und erstrebt: in Frieden und Freundschaft mit allen Nationen zu leben

(Just as the entire German nation recognises and pursues one high purpose and one only: to live in peace and friendship with all other nations)

Die Politik der österreichischen Regierung hat zu einer allgemeinen internationalen Beunruhigung geführt. (The policy of the Austrian government has led to general international disquiet.)

THESE VOICES in the cacophony of the age may seem to us rather unequal factors in a situation leading to Hitler’s assumption of power. Yet what they have in common is central to Karl Kraus’s undertaking: he presents them all as modes of a defective imagination. They all live from an excess of verbiage and a dearth of facts, and bring about a situation in which it is impossible to tell one fact from the other. It is a situation Karl Kraus has described many times before, and in many contexts. Here it is summed up in terms of international “politics”:

Wahrscheinlich muss das alles so sein und erfordert das Heil der Welt, dass die Genossen Litwinow und Henderson in ihrem Umgang nicht zimperlich sind. Oder vielleicht ist die ganze Welt ein Opfer der Erpressung, wenn Gangster sich einer Staatskasse bemächtigen. Dann hätte Politik den Zustand herbeigeführt und das Erhebendste daran ist, wie sich die Menschheit gewöhnt hat, sie als etwas ausser dem Bereich der Menschheit zu empfinden. Und das Erstaunliche an den Dingen wäre dann nicht so sehr,

dass es sie gibt, als dass immer wieder Menschen für diesen Beruf geboren werden und die Sprache erlernen, die die Sachverhalte entbehrt, aber bewirkt.

(Presumably it is inevitable, and requisite for the general good of mankind, that comrades Litvinov and Henderson are not fastidious about the company they keep. Or perhaps the entire world falls victim to blackmail when gangsters seize control of a state treasury. In that case, too, it is politics that has created the situation, and the most edifying thing about it is the way humanity has grown accustomed to regard politics as something outside the sphere of humanity. And in that case what is astonishing is not so much that there is such a thing as politics, as rather that people continue to be born for this profession and to master its language which, being without factual substance, yet creates it.)

Here politics is defined as the defeat of the imagination by its own self-generated lies. The dismantling of the language of violence and of "the metaphor that has been taken back into its reality" had been one of Kraus's favourite critical devices—here it leads to an astonishing variety of insights. Figurative phrases like "*das Messer an die Kehle setzen* (putting a knife to the throat) . . . *der Mund zu stopfen* (a mouth to be gagged) . . . *die Faust zu zeigen* (to show a fist) . . . *mit harter Faust durchgreifen* (cutting a way through) . . . *aus der Deutschen Arbeitsfront ausstossen* (to chuck out of) . . . *Salz in offene Wunden streuen* (to rub salt into the open wound)" have ceased to bear any metaphorical meaning and have become the facts of daily life.

Wir sagen nicht: Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn, nein, wer uns ein Auge ausschlägt, dem werden wir den Kopf abschlagen, und wer uns einen Zahn ausschlägt, dem werden wir den Kiefer einschlagen.

(We don't say, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". No! Whoever puts our eye out will have his head cut off, whoever knocks our tooth out will have his jaw smashed in.)

A last main strand in this structure of motifs are the literary quotations—mainly of course from the two *Walpurgisnacht* scenes of *Faust*, but also from Platen and from Shakespeare. The function of the press is challenged as Cleopatra challenges the messenger that brings her news of Antony's wedding ("Thou shalt be whipped with wire, and stewed in brine . . ."). While performing his strange antics, the new Minister of Food follows the advice of Lear's fool: "as the cockney did to the eels, when she put them in the paste alive; she knapped them of the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, 'Down, wantons, down!' 'T was her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay . . .". The magnificent portrait of Hitler—another disembodied collage—begins with an allusion to Macbeth. Kraus then turns to "those monsters which are shown at Mme Tussaud's because they once exercised a magnetic attraction on servant girls with post-office

savings-accounts", but now rank as major European statesmen, among them that simple face one is sure to have met before, for instance in some Alpine hostelry—"das schlichte Antlitz, dem man schon in einem alpenländischen Gasthose begegnet sein muss." And the passage ends:

so erhält man durch diesen Anschauungsunterricht wahrlich einen so niederschmetternden Begriff von Eugenik wie der biedere Kent, als er vor der Runde ausbrach:

*Herr! Grad heraus und offen ist mein Brauch:
Ich sah mitunter bessere Gesichter
als hier auf irgend einer Schulter jetzt
Vor meinen Augen stehn.*

(From this very palpable instruction one is left with the same overpowering idea of eugenics as the worthy Kent, when before the assembled company he exclaimed:

"Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.")

IS THERE, THEN, no "straight" passage in this complex interplay of allusions, puns, quotations? The essay is as tautly organised over a stretch of 300 pages as were those single sentences with which I illustrated Kraus's idea of an intensive style. It is hard to imagine how there could be a "straight" historical narrative, seeing that the reality that is presented is the bizarre thing it is. (Even today it seems impossible to write a history of the Third Reich without allowing the expository prose to take on a dignity that does not belong to the subject matter, and thus falsifies it.)

Nevertheless, there are passages which bring us as near to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of National Socialism as any writing of "straight history." The world is apt to misunderstand the "new" Germany, Kraus is saying in a voice of the utmost contempt. These men are not evil, they just have different senses:

Dass der Volksgenosse die Dinge nicht glaubt, von denen er vielleicht einmal hört, mag doch durch die Absperrung zu erklären sein, die sich im Umschwung der Lebensverhältnisse als notwendig herausgestellt hat. Dass er aber auch die Dinge nicht glaubt, die er sieht, ja nicht einmal die, die er tut; dass er nicht weiss, was er tut, und sich darum gleich selbst vergibt, das zeugt von einem Gemüt ohne Falsch, dem die Andersgearteten wohl ausweichen, aber nicht misstrauen sollten. Da ihm die Gabe ward, nicht lügen zu können, und weil es doch auch unmöglich wäre, so viel zu lügen wie der Tatbestand erfordern würde, so kann nur ein mediales Vermögen im Spiele sein, das solchem Wesen die Dinge, die aus Illusion erschaffen sind, wieder durch Illusion entrücken hilft.

(That [today's German] does not believe those things which he may on occasion hear about can surely be explained by the segregation which has proved necessary in the present revolutionary conditions of life. But the fact that he does not believe the things he sees, or even the things he does; the fact that he knows not what he does and therefore instantly

forgives himself—this bears witness to a guileless soul which should be shunned but not distrusted by those differently constituted. Since it is given to him not to be able to lie, and since moreover it is impossible to lie on such a scale as the facts of the case would require, we must be in the presence of a mediumistic faculty, which enables such a being to rid himself, by means of illusion, of the things which are the creation of illusion in the first place.)

And here the argument comes full circle. These men are after all the heirs of those journalists and intellectuals (by no means always Gentile) who had made clichés out of reality and whose impoverished imagination Kraus had attacked and shown up thirty years before. What he is presenting is a fiction, but life has caught up with it.

And what makes Karl Kraus's essentially literary critique so pertinent is the pervertedly literary aspect of National Socialism itself. It made its converts, "not only among the simpler idiots but among the intellectuals too", by appealing to such worthy 19th-century sentiments as authenticity, courage, loyalty and integrity, and by propagating these sentiments through stereotypes unmistakably literary in origin. The function of National Socialist propaganda was to

establish an embattled continuity which stretches from the commendation of these values through persuasion to intimidation and terror—all the way to annihilation. It thus offered the negative side of Kraus's "pre-established harmony": not an identity of words and deeds, but a terrible continuity between them.

I SPOKE OF THE AMBIVALENT satisfaction which the literary achievement entails for its author—and, I may now add, for the reader too. What pleasure, Aristotle asks, do we get out of a presentation of strange monsters? The pleasure of the form and the pleasure of new knowledge. It is these that make *Die Dritte Walpurgisnacht* the strange masterpiece it is.

But, the reader may ask in some puzzlement, what about that favourite topic of literary discussion, the problem of satire? What about Karl Kraus the satirist? There was, in a sense, no need to use these terms, for they are what this essay has been about. The intensity of the negative vision, pressed to the point where it looks like the only adequate vision there is—that, more than anything else, is his idea of literature.

Shall These Bones Live

I detest the young:
the way they live in sleeping bags, the way
they embrace themselves
dancing, and arrive at dinners
in sweatshirts. I have an aversion
to their sincere voices and knuckledusters.

I detest the middle-aged:
the way they refuse to play
with their fathers,
the way they can pack everything they love
into holiday caravans, and hold down jobs
the dead should be having.

I detest the aged:
the way they haven't any homes, the way
they keep stumbling,
reaching out their hands,
to be held, to be held.
I have an aversion to their bird-eating
spiders, their hands.

D. M. Thomas

POETRY

On the Breaking of Forms

By John Wain

NEAR THE BEGINNING of Ezra Pound's *Canto LXXXI* occurs a line that has been much quoted by those who see E.P. primarily as the great innovator, the key-turner who conducted poetry in English out of the cell of an obsolete idiom. This line is enclosed in brackets and reads:

(to break the pentameter, that was the first heave)

The words have struck a particularly responsive chord among those who see the "pentameter" (or, as they usually call it, the "iambic pentameter") as the main repressive instrument whereby poetry was held back and denied its birthright of a living speech rhythm. It is true that when one actually looks the line up, it turns out not to be in a passage concerning the technicalities of verse, or the relationship of literature to language, except as part of a very general disquisition on "cultural level"; but then I feel a proper hesitation in assigning "subject" to any part of the *Cantos*, especially the *Pisan Cantos*, of which this is one. Confined in his prison camp, actually in his steel-mesh cage (ah, yes, that cage!) the poet had no access to books, and fell back on that most allusive and multi-dimensional instrument, the memory. The immediate context runs

*"You will find" said old André Spire,
that every man on that board (Crédit Agricole)
has a brother-in-law*

*"You the one, I the few"
said John Adams
speaking of fears in the abstract
to his volatile friend Mr Jefferson
(to break the pentameter, that was the first heave)
or as Jo Bard says: they never speak to each other,
if it is baker and concierge visibly
it is La Rochefoucauld and de Maintenon audibly.*

Perhaps the baker and concierge, so commonplace to the eye and so aristocratic to the ear, are meant to typify the stilted grandeur of an artificial metre. It all depends, I suppose, on whether it is meant to be a good thing or a bad thing that there is such a gap between how these people look and how they talk. Personally I have long since abandoned the search for a

solution of these puzzles, which in the later *Cantos* meet one at the rate of about one every seven lines; to sort them out calls not only for an inwardness with the Poundian Sacred Books, but also for a kind of mental hedge-hopping that I know, now, I shall never be able to cultivate. Still, we might as well assume that those people are right who flourish this line as a banner, and read in it one of the prime objectives of Pound's modernising programme between about 1908 and 1920 when he left England for good. Such an assumption makes it even more interesting to turn over two pages and read, in that same *Canto LXXXI*, the famous passage:

*The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.
Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
Learn of the green world what can be thy place
In scaled invention or true artistry,
Pull down thy vanity,
Paquin pull down!
The green casque has outdone your elegance.
"Master thyself, then others shall thee beare"
Pull down thy vanity
Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
Half black half white
Nor knowst'ou wing from tail
Pull down thy vanity
How mean thy hates
Fostered in falsity,
Pull down thy vanity,
Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
Pull down thy vanity,
I say pull down.*

These lines are probably the best-known in the entire *Cantos*, certainly in the later ones; the average reader of modern poetry, if asked without warning to quote anything from the *Cantos*, would almost certainly produce some part of them; they stay in the mind as memorable and moving. It is impossible, of course, to separate them from one's knowledge of the poet's situation at the time of writing, and to that extent they are a personal utterance and even "autobiographical." But what particularly concerns me at the moment is that they are decasyllables: or,

if you prefer the term, iambic pentameters. To be strictly impartial, when we quote

to break the pentameter, that was the first heave

we should not fail to add that the best-known passage in all Pound's later work follows almost immediately and is in flat contradiction or reversal of the "heave."

I HAVE NO DOUBT that among the flock of commentators who follow the Cantos like gulls following a ship there will be some who would describe these lines as parody. Pound's generally allusive and frequently satiric manner lends itself very easily to parody, and indeed is continually treading on its verge. Some of his most celebrated passages have an undoubted tinge of parody, as in the famous lyric from "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" beginning "Go dumb-born book", where the poet in deciding to break finally with a certain tradition of romantic lyricism pays that tradition the tribute of a last salute—exquisitely written (to show that he can bring off these effects if he chooses) and slightly overblown (to indicate which of its characteristic features make him uneasy). To my present argument it makes, of course, no difference whether we decide that these particular decasyllables have, or have not, somewhat the function of parody. What matters is that, having arrived at a key passage, an emotional and doctrinal node, the poet chooses to pick up the rhythm of the classic English ten-syllable line which it was earlier his dedicated "heave" to get away from.

PARODY OR NOT, deadly serious or not, these lines convey their meaning as much by their form as by their paraphrasable content. Put like that, it is a *cliché*. Every statement does so, from the humblest fragment of conversation to the highly conscious use of linguistic effect that we call literature. All the more reason why Pound's lines should stand at the threshold of a discussion of form in poetry and the imaginative arts generally. Form is communication. It is a system of signals between writer and reader. Immediately on approaching a poem, story or novel, the reader recognises the nature of its form, and that recognition establishes a relationship. In the case of a poem, as soon as we begin to read we see whether it fits in to a previously existing form—sonnet, ballad, limerick—or whether it eschews form altogether. In any event, the poet is aligning himself with all those poets before him who have done the same.

To write a passage in end-stopped couplets is to stand in some relationship with all the previous poets who have used that metre: or the *villanelle*,

or the *canzone*, or the alliterative line breaking into two halves, or the *haiku*. It is, in practice, impossible to write in a form without indicating some sort of attitude towards the literary tradition, and therefore to the past generally. And since one's attitude to the past is a seamless fabric with one's attitude to the present, the choice of form also signals a cluster of opinions about the political and social realities of one's own day. I do not propose to push the argument to absurd lengths—it is not possible to deduce the whole range of a writer's beliefs from his choice of form for one poem—but it remains true that a writer's attitude towards form, which is inescapably the first thing we notice when we approach his work, is a reliable guide to his attitudes in general. And we should notice here—if it is not too obvious to be worth pointing out—that non-form (free verse, absence of punctuation, breakdown of normal word-order and syntax) is merely, from this point of view, one of the possible choices of form. To adopt it is to align oneself with all the previous writers who have made that particular choice. Talk of "freedom" in such a case is bound to be to some extent illusory: there is no avenue that leads to complete individualism, there is only a choice of different categories of alignment.

THE ATTEMPT TO "ESCAPE" from "the confines of" form is meaningless. Once a writer accepts this and begins to explore the possibilities of form as communication, he has come of age. One of the most fertile of these possibilities is the use of form as external reference, a means whereby the poem can point outside itself. Kipling's "Danny Deever" is a good simple example. Here, for reminder, are the first two stanzas.

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.

"To turn you out, to turn you out", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.

"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,

The regiment's in 'ollow square—they're hangin' him today;

They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,

An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.

"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" says Files-on-Parade.

"A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun", the Colour-Sergeant said.

"They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,

*They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the
ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin'
hound—
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."*

Two devices are used here. Each stanza begins with a question-and-answer which intentionally recalls the use of the same device in the late mediaeval border ballads such as "Edward":

*"Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward,
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?"*

*"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair but hee O".*

*"Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O".*

*"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."*

*"Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
"Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule ye drie O."*

*"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"*

*"And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,
Edward, Edward?
"And whatten penance will ye drie for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."*

*"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovr the sea O."*

*"And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"*

*"Ile let thame stand tul they down fa,
Mither, mither,
"Ile let thame stand tul they down fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."*

*"And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovr the sea O?"*

*"The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."*

*"And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O."*

*"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counsells ye gave to me O."*

That degree of concentration and dramatisation—everything that can be left out is left out, so that (for instance) we are not told why Edward's mother made him kill his father—is an effect that Kipling is both seeking to reproduce and also to recall by allusion. Then, in its second part, his stanza breaks into the rhythm of the regimental march. The juxtaposition is strikingly successful because it brings together the two worlds whose ideas and attitudes the poem straddles. A long-term volunteer army, serving in a foreign country, breeds the same kind of remorseless loves and hates as a static border feudal society, the same vendettas and revenge-killings; to combine the world of "Edward" (which is, *mutatis mutandis*, the world of *Macbeth*) with the world of the parade-ground is already to convey much of the poem's essential meaning. A contemporary protest-poet, aghast at the horrors of militarism, would dwell far more on the physical horrors of the hanging, but would scarcely equal the *frisson* of Kipling's laconic exchanges, with their rich overtones in poetic tradition.

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine", said Files-on-Parade

"'E's sleepin' out an' far to-night", the Colour-Sergeant said.

ANOTHER USE OF FORM as external reference is of course the ironic use of a form whose associations run counter to the meaning that is specifically conveyed. The aubade, a love-song from the lover to his mistress at dawn, is given a new slant—part sardonic, part poignant—in William Empson's "Aubade", which begins

Hours before dawn we were woken by the quake.

Louis MacNeice, at about the same time, was giving the same title to his poem about waking from the illusory comfort of the 1930s to the realities of Czechoslovakia and Poland.

*Having bitten on life like a sharp apple
Or, playing it like a fish, been happy,*

*Having felt with fingers that the sky is blue,
What have we after that to look forward to?*

*Not the twilight of the gods but a precise dawn
Of sallow and grey bricks, and newsboys crying war.*

The title of that poem—"Aubade"—is only one word long, but it works harder than any other single word even in this characteristic specimen of MacNeice's terse lyricism. It plugs the poem in to a whole system of resonances. Another example would be Thomas Hardy's triolet, "At a Hasty Wedding."

*If hours be years the twain are blest
For now they solace swift desire
By bonds of every bond the best,*

*If hours be years. The twain are blest
Do eastern stars slope never west,
Nor pallid ashes follow fire:
If hours be years the twain are blest,
For now they solace swift desire.*

The triolet is so much associated with carefree, light emotions that Hardy's gleeful grimness peers through it with far more effect than would have been possible with a "straight" choice of form. It is, I suppose, superfluous to point out the brilliant touches of detail; a line like "*By bonds of every bond the best*", which is exactly in the vein of the mediaeval triolet as domesticated in Victorian English poetry, is a plank leading to the cold-water splash of "*If hours be years*" (but they aren't). The poem's ominous note, conveying clearly that these two imprudent people are preparing many years of unhappiness for one another, sounds so clearly because of the tension between the wedding-cake prettiness of the form and the dourness of the content. "Escape from form" and you escape from all such possibilities.

THIS IS NOT MEANT TO BE an exhaustive list of the possibilities of form, but even in such a rapid canter it would be fatal to leave out the simple bedrock use: form as mimesis. This is so obvious (everyone knows that the manner of a piece of writing must to some extent mimic the matter, so that one doesn't express a funereal lament in perky jog-trot rhythms or produce the verbal equivalent of trying to do a Cossack dance to a pavane) that it tends to sink out of sight. Yet how can we explain the perfection of a poem like Chidiok Tichbourne's "Written the Night Before his Execution" without pointing out the obvious, that the prowling rhythm and echoing rhyme convey the sense of feet pacing round a dungeon, and beyond that the intolerable constriction of death moving in on a healthy young life?

*My prime of youth is but a frost of cares;
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain;
My crop of corn is but a field of tares;
And all my good is but vain hope of gain;
My life is fled, and yet I saw no sun;
And now I live, and now my life is done.*

*The spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung;
The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves be green;
My youth is gone, and yet I am but young;
I saw the world, and yet I was not seen;
My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun;
And now I live, and now my life is done.*

*I sought my death and found it in my womb,
I looked for life, and saw it was a shade,
I trod the earth and knew it was my tomb,
And now I die, and now I am but made:
The glass is full, and now my glass is run,
And now I live, and now my life is done.*

The thought of mimesis brings with it, as of right, the thought of the dramatic. Most mimetic poems have at any rate a hint of attribution to a speaker. Take the brilliant pencil-sketch by Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool." It shows a group of delinquents in a pool-room.

*We real cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon.*

The pared-down vocabulary, echoing in rhyme as the click of the plastic balls echoes in the pool-room and as the frustrated young lives echo in the empty spaces of the city, conveys the inarticulateness of the young people, their narrow, thwarted violence. The result is a perfect marriage of form to content: dramatic, though not striking one directly as "dramatic" because the dramatic element is perfectly organised into the whole.

WHEN THE DRAMATIC ELEMENT does take command, it does so either for conspicuous good or conspicuous ill. Those Victorian "dramatic monologues", especially Browning's, which read like too-long speeches excerpted from an unwritten play, are undramatic in themselves and help to suggest reasons for the failure of Victorian closet-drama. The dramatic, in or out of poetry, is a matter of concreteness, of sharply focussed time and place: nothing is dramatic that does not happen in a definable here and now:

*Mark but this flea, and mark in this
How little that which thou deniest me, is.*

In "Sailing to Byzantium" Yeats has the old artist, seeking refuge from the "breathing human passion" as did Keats once, come on-stage with a gesture towards the land he has left behind:

That is no country for old men.

To begin so abruptly with "That" is an effective way of beginning the poem on a dramatic trajectory; he is placing both himself and the country he has left, and, for that matter, the holy city he has come to. Thereafter we see him looking round in awestruck wonder and love at the city which is to be his life, his justification and his element, taking into his possession all its splendours.

*O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre
And be the singing-masters of my soul.*

This is dramatic: dramatic through and through with never a dab of greasepaint. The

only thing that comes near it is that other soliloquy of an old man, *Gerontion*, which conveys so perfectly the play of memory in a fading mind. (Fraulein von Kulp, who paused in the hall, one hand on the door, is more vivid than some characters who have had whole plays written about them.) And that poem, too, speaks largely through its form. Eliot managed to write a soliloquy in Jacobean blank verse without suggesting any one specific Jacobean dramatist.

SO FAR, I HAVE BEEN SPEAKING of form as a signalling system between the poet and his audience. So it is, but it is also an important channel of life-giving communication between one poet and another. When one poet learns from another we call the result an "influence." Sooner or later everyone who talks about any art finds himself talking about influences, from the most profound scholar to the cub reporter who comes round to interview a writer and asks him which of his contemporaries has influenced him. So we should not be too proud to go along with this universal practice. And as soon as we reflect on it, we see that the influence of one writer on another is always a matter of form, whether there is an influence of theme and attitude or not. The influence of poet *A* on poet *B* may or may not be a matter of subject, but it is always a matter of form. So that, in a literature which denies itself a variety and abundance of forms, it is that much harder for one poet to set another's bell ringing.

I distinguish three kinds of influence. First, the openly proclaimed influence, the conscious imitation of an original which has high prestige in the tradition ("Look at me writing like Aeschylus") or high cash-value among the populace ("Look at me writing like Ian Fleming"). Second, the sheer technical helpfulness of one writer's work to another. Literature is a difficult art, and one is often groping for an effect without being certain how to attain it; if, at such a point, one has the luck to come across another writer who has achieved the objective, his procedures can be assimilated to one's own idiom. Third, unconscious influence born of ignorance. Every writer is influenced by somebody; language is a social medium, learnt initially by listening to others and copying them, and though a writer may attain originality in greater or less degree, he never starts with it. On the other hand, if he has no knowledge of the art of literature and no range of reading, he will be influenced by what is nearest to hand without even knowing that it is an influence. (A hundred years ago every English journalist tried to write like Macaulay,

including the young novice trying to get into print in the village paper who had never heard of Macaulay and was simply trying to write in the way that was expected of him.)

The first category of influence—the proudly proclaimed reproduction of the style of some admired master—is to be seen everywhere and at all times. When the master's prestige is high enough, merely to reproduce the same effects is praise enough. There are poets writing today in English who would be nothing but flattered to be told that they had succeeded in imitating Mayakovsky or Paz or Neruda; and surely the young Stephen Spender would have felt the same if told that he wrote like Rilke.

When the language of the lofty model is very very far removed from the language of the imitation, we often find a blend of the first and second kinds of influence. A. E. Housman, for instance, wanted to reproduce the lyrical terseness of Horace, that blend of lucidity and density; he succeeded, partly no doubt by direct imitation of Horace but also with the aid of the poems of R. L. Stevenson and, confessedly, Samuel Johnson's *jeu d'esprit*, "Long Awaited One and Twenty." Another example of this two-stage influence, more interesting still because it involves two languages other than English, comes to mind when we invoke the honoured name of Milton. When Milton set out to write an epic poem, he wanted to remind the reader of Virgil and to some extent also of Homer. (Influence, first category.) But in his long search for a style that would achieve this, he got the most practical help from Italian literature. Certainly there are other elements in the finished style: direct imitation of his classical models, instinctive prompting from the genius of the English language, probably some help from an English epic tradition running through Spenser. But the electric starter which made his own engine begin turning over was the Italian example—Tasso in the theory of *Discorsi del Poema Eroico* and the practice of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* and behind Tasso the experimental sonnets of Della Casa, and Bembo's critical *Prose della Volgar Lingua*.

All this was finely expounded twenty years ago by F. T. Prince in *The Italian Element in Milton's Verse*, a beautiful book and a show-case example of how to analyse the effects of a learned poet. Not only does Prince indicate with delicacy and precision exactly what techniques Milton took from the Italian poems that were in front of him; he distinguishes between the help Milton received from poetic practice and the help he received from critical discussion. In the case of the sonnet, Italian poets had already achieved perfection, and there were many masterly examples

for Milton to follow. But in the more important case of the epic, the theory had been elaborated but the greatest work had still to come; it did not arrive till the 18th century, with Parini's *Il Giorno*. But, F.T. Prince adds,

... this eighteenth-century achievement, and the admirable blank verse of the Romantic period which followed it, had itself been prepared for by the experiments of the *Cinquecento*: Milton in England did but develop the Italian epic tradition as it might well have been developed in Italy itself in the seventeenth century, had it not been for the failure of creative power which then came to Italian literature.

I find this an inspiring thought. It is so perfect an example of how the torch of great art can be passed from one nation to another, just as long as there are original artists willing to take the trouble and undergo the discipline. By making himself so completely familiar with the Italian humanist discussion of what a modern epic could be like, Milton was in a position to put these hopeful theories into practice before the Italians themselves did so. (I am accepting Prince's account here, but I do not think it has been challenged.) It also seems to me wise to admit that there are some phenomena that literary history cannot explain. Prince makes no attempt to explain why "a failure of creative power came to Italian literature" in the 17th century. It just came, like the sudden access of power which came to English literature at the end of the 16th century, an epoch not notable for good writing until the sudden blaze of glory in the 1580s. There may well be social reasons for these phenomena, much as undersea earthquakes cause tidal waves; but it is not necessarily the business of the literary critic to find them. What does necessarily concern the critic is the impressive way in which power flows through the forms, so that to study them is to plug oneself in to a source of imaginative strength. Great poetry results when the poet who receives this strength is able to match it with his own native vitality. Neither will do without the other. At certain times in the past, too many poets have relied too much on the vitality of the forms and been unable to match it with vitality of their own; today, too many poets ignore the latent vitality in form and try to get by on their own vitality alone.

HOW DID THIS come about? Given the variety of strengths and advantages that the strategic use of form can give the poet, how did the whole notion come to be thrown aside? For thrown aside, very obviously, it has been. The result is a poetry heavily under one single influence, the influence of prose. Literary history

can show us, in many languages, examples of prose influenced by verse; with English poetry, at the moment, it is the other way round. Since it is not given to any human artist to be so original that he breaks free of *all* influences and still remains an artist, a poet who throws away all the aids designed for him by his predecessors in poetry ends up leaning on one crutch alone, the crutch of prose.

I was forcibly reminded of this when reading the issue of *ENCOUNTER* for August 1973. "R", in his column, was engaged in bestowing high praise on a new book by D. J. Enright, *The Terrible Shears*, poems recalling his boyhood in Leamington during the 1930s. High as it is, I am sure R's praise for this book is merited ("irony and wit are at one with deep feeling, and a highly complex and sophisticated personality finds expression in a deceptively natural and simple language"—personally I would outlaw "deceptive" as a critical term, but still). The passages quoted, however, are interesting for our present discussion because of their complete abandonment of any verse-technique at all—except, of course, for the chopping-up which makes it look like verse to the eye.

*The wife of a teacher at school (she was
Mother of one of my classmates) was
Genuinely enraged when I won a scholarship.
She stopped me in the street, to tell me
(With a loudness I supposed was upper-class)
That Cambridge was not for the likes of me, nor was
Long hair, nor the verse I wrote for the school mag.*

*Her sentiments were precisely those of the
Working class. Unanimity on basic questions
Accounts for why we never had the revolution.*

Of course this is highly effective writing—Mr Enright is too professional a writer to blur or stutter, and always makes his points with satisfying neatness. But the question I cannot repress when I read verse like this—or like the poems in R. S. Thomas's recent collection *H'm*—is: why is this in verse? Or, more precisely, since it so obviously isn't in verse, why is it offered as such? After all, there is nothing to be ashamed of in writing prose, especially when one writes it as well as Enright or Thomas. But is that really what the art of poetry has come down to—a typographic convention, allowing a certain kind of essayist to be classified as a poet?

"Somehow [R goes on] Mr Enright has managed to combine a flat Midlands accent with rhythms of an almost Chinese subtlety." With due respect, I don't believe it. If the book did not happen to be concerned with Leamington I don't believe R would have detected a Midland accent in it, and as for the bit about almost Chinese subtlety, it means nothing without some supporting demonstration that R knows what the

rhythms of Chinese poetry are. (From what period? what region?) Perhaps it is time we all came off it and decided to call verse verse and prose prose.

R. S. THOMAS, by the way, is a particularly depressing example of the damage caused to a poet's work by the flight from form. His subject-matter has always been rather lowering (depopulation of the countryside: depopulation of the human heart through the decay of beliefs, etc.). But there was a time when the depressing nature of what Thomas conveyed was irradiated and made bearable by his beautiful sense of rhythm and sound. The poems in *H'm* offer no such consolation. Here is one of them, "Via Negativa":

*Why no! I never thought other than
That God is that great absence
In our lives, the empty silence
Within, the place where we go
Seeking, not in hope to
Arrive or find. He keeps the interstices
In our knowledge, the darkness
Between stars. His are the echoes
We follow, the footprints he has just
Left. We put our hands in
His side hoping to find
It warm. We look at people
And places as though he had looked
At them, too; but miss the reflection.*

This is undeniably a fine poem. A fine piece of writing, on second thought. And that is always something to be grateful for, in our rubbish-clogged age. But—to say the least—the lowered, daunted quality of the subject-matter is matched by the same characteristics in the expression. Why complain? Isn't that what writing is all about—getting the two in line?

Not quite. There is a contrapuntal quality about most good writing, a creative tension between opposites, that is itself an important element in the "meaning" to be communicated. In the days when R. S. Thomas made graceful, lyrical poems about being daunted, he was telling us that the negative experience was being contained in a mind, and expressed by a sensibility, that was reaching beyond, attaining something positive. Perhaps, in the deep night that now faces the faltering human race, this attitude should be given up. But in that case, so will the very idea of art. Because art has always sought to contain chaos and failure in a tensile web of the ordered and the achieved.

IN THE MODERN ARTS, as has often been remarked, novelty is the uncomfortable norm. That this has led to a flight from the formal vessels associated with a tradition is therefore

not surprising. But that flight, which has now reached its ultimate boundary and has brought us to the verge of non-communication, will, unless it changes direction, take us out of art altogether. Is this what we want?

In some quarters, the answer would probably be Yes. That corruption of the democratic ideal which asserts as a dogma that what all can't attain no one must—a corruption that would make high achievement impossible in physics as in politics, in basketball as in cooking, in engineering as in acting—infallibly leads to an impatient dismissal of craftsmanship and knowledge as "élitism." Not thinking so ill of democracy, which has always seemed to me a noble ideal, I cannot see why it should not be part of the richness of human life that many, or most, skills and crafts should be within the reach only of people who were born with a gift and have laboured to develop that gift. One can, of course, imagine a bad *élite*, an *élite* based on privilege and money, admitting no one to its ranks who had not been to the right schools and been elected to the right clubs. This *élite* would be bad because it would exclude people of imagination and integrity, on irrelevant grounds, and thus impoverish itself; and, if it were in a dominant position within the culture, it would impoverish the whole culture. But I can see nothing wrong with an *élite* that can be joined by anyone who is prepared to do his homework, take trouble, be self-critical.

The tragedy of our present situation is that gifted young artists are being ruined by the all-pervading impression that art is easy. I once had a letter from a youth, enclosing a sheaf of his poems for criticism, in which he informed me that he had decided to go in for poetry as a career because it was, as far as he could see, the easiest thing to make a reputation at. This unfortunate lad was probably no loss to the world of literature, but in his simple way he reflected an attitude that is doing harm to genuinely gifted people.

On a more positive note: since I have named two contemporary poets who to my way of thinking do not, despite their splendid gifts, make a satisfactory amalgam of form with content, it is right that I should if possible name two who do. First, Philip Larkin. Next, John Heath-Stubbs. Mr Heath-Stubbs is a contrasting type. Squarely within the poetic tradition of the learned man who makes use of his learning, he makes of his poetry a coat of many colours, and the reader's response is enriched by—though never totally dependent on—the range of these colours he is able to recognise and trace to their source. His epic poem *Artorius* (1973) draws to one centre a wide field of references and a wide range of styles. In the course of it he modulates from alliterative verse to rhymed lyrics to

decasyllabics to prose to the formal ode. The main burden of the narrative is borne by a loosened blank verse which I would trace to the Arthurian poems of Charles Williams; but virtually every age of English poetry is laid under contribution, and the result is a poem entirely of the 1970s, since all the elements have been simmered in the cauldron of the poet's imagination and his life is lived in the here and now.

THESE TWO EXAMPLES, one that I glance at here and one that I reserve for a fuller treatment later, may give us heart. For a full and creative use of form will not come back unless form is conceived of as something vital, a source of strength, of subtlety, of awareness.

Sixty years ago there was every reason for taking the contrary attitude. The generation of great artists who came to maturity in the years about 1914—the generation of Picasso, of Gertrude Stein, of Stravinsky, of Pound—had all been born and brought up in the Victorian era, when children were seen and not heard. Any form of self-expression had been rigorously denied them by the prevailing *mores* of their society. The result was an urgent need for liberation from social and aesthetic restraints. Putting such a high value on self-expression, they made it the backbone of their work, becoming the great self-expressers of all time. (Eliot's continually proffered theory of objectivity concealed from his admirers, for thirty years, the basically idiosyncratic and personal nature of his work. The others scarcely tried to conceal it; more often, they gloried in it.) But no artist now living can remember a time when self-expression had to be won at such cost. Our memories are of flux and transience.

IN CONCLUSION, it seems to me possible that the throwing away of form in contemporary poetry and the arts generally is the result partly of that jelly-bellied democratisation (in a mass society, only the lowest level of *finesse* is acceptable) and partly to sheer mental confusion. The birth of modern art was attended by an impulse to escape from form, so its maturity must be true to the same impulse. The implications are not thought out. How, otherwise, can we explain the pitiful arguments brought forward to justify shapeless and sinewless expression? Take, as a concrete example, the frequently-voiced opinion that traditional rhythmic patterns (the "iambic", for instance) are no longer true to the way the language actually flows on people's tongues. We can't write iambs because people don't speak them any more. This fallacy can be nailed simply by keeping one's ears open. Here are three of the scores of perfectly formed iambic penta-

meters I heard uttered in ordinary speech during a couple of day's listening out:

Two men speaking of a third: *You never know with Harry, what he'll do.*

Mother to child: *Your face is dirty. Do you ever wash?*

Journalist, interviewing politician on the radio: *How would you like to see the system changed?*

Nor is the iambic the only one. All the metrical patterns that have served poets faithfully are still serving ordinary speakers. The rhythms of the Anglo-Saxon alliterative metre are so pervasive that one cannot talk in English for two minutes without running through the whole repertory of them. And rhythms from outside English, such as the Alexandrine and the hexameter, are very apt to occur in speech. W. H. Auden's last collection, *Thank You, Fog*, contains interesting evidence that, having gone along for some years with the idea of shuffling prose-influenced verse, he was becoming drawn to the rhythms of Latin poetry. There are poems that seem lightly based on the hexameter, and there are one or two direct forays into the Ovidian elegiac couplet, pentameter and hexameter—for instance:

Policy ought to conform to Liberty, Law and Compassion but, as a rule It obeys Selfishness, Vanity, Funk.

Auden was always alert to the rhythms of the spoken language, an alertness probably forced on him by his change of habitat in early middle life. Anyone who listens to the spoken language will see where the classical metres, and all other metres, came from. A few minutes before writing these paragraphs I was in my study hunting for a letter I had mislaid, and called to my wife, "There isn't a cache of letters that I don't know about, is there?" Which is a hexameter, though the fact would probably not be noticed if we were not playing the metre game. So much for the idea that the more unformed one's verse is, the more it fails to rise to any strong rhythmic pattern, the more it resembles "living speech." A selection from the real language of men is always, among other things, a selection of prosody.

The painter Victor Neep, who like most painters has to do a certain amount of teaching to make ends meet, went in to his class one day and was greeted by one of the students with, "We've been discussing it and we've decided that no painting is worth anything that doesn't make its protest."

"Exactly", said Mr Neep without hesitation. "Like—that", and he pointed to a still-life of some apples by Cézanne.

"What's that protesting against?" asked the student.

"Sloppy thinking", replied Mr Neep.

BOOKS & WRITERS

One Mill, or Two

Freedom, Feminism & Fashion—By MAURICE CRANSTON

JOHN STUART MILL has a reputation for holding contradictory opinions. The appearance in the Toronto edition of his Collected Works of four volumes of *Later Letters*¹ provides only more abundant examples of his paradoxical utterances, notably on such matters as the freedom of the individual and the right ordering of society, about which he felt very deeply and about which he wrote extremely influential books.

Professor Gertrude Himmelfarb, in the latest of her writings on the subject,² puts forward the suggestion that there were two Mills, the first of whom she depicts as the adversary of the second. This is something that might well be said of other men. For example—limiting ourselves to theorists who can fairly be compared to Mill—we could say there were two Lockes and two Matthew Arnolds—the Locke of the *Essay* who eliminates natural law and the Locke of the *Treatises* who builds his argument on natural law, the Arnold who pleads for democracy and the Arnold who despises what is democratic. But Dr Himmelfarb feels that the contradictions in Mill are so acute as to call for some special explanation; and explanation of more than one kind she provides in what is surely the most challenging, and most dazzling, of several excellent studies of Mill that have come out in recent years.³

The contradiction in Mill to which Dr Himmelfarb

devotes most of her attention is that between what seems to be the central argument of the essay *On Liberty* and the argument of most of Mill's other writings about politics. Since the word "liberal" is richly ambiguous, both arguments can equally be called "liberal." As Dr Himmelfarb remarks:

liberalism has sometimes the quality Mill gave it in *On Liberty*, sometimes that which it had for the other Mill. . . . The ambiguities and ambivalences that are to be found in him are those that have beset much of modern political thought and that continue to plague us today.

A fair comment; indeed it is just for this reason that Dr Himmelfarb's book can be commended to readers generally in addition to those who have a special interest in Mill. *On Liberty*⁴ was Mill's most widely read and most translated publication. It was a pamphlet, as distinct from an academic treatise. One would naturally expect it to be simpler than such books as his *Logic*, his *Political Economy*, and even his *Representative Government*. But the first odd thing about *On Liberty* is that it is not so much simple as simplistic. Mill in his *Autobiography* described it as "a kind of philosophic textbook of a single truth" or the assertion of "one very simple principle", that simple principle being "that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection."

The Mill of the other writings—Dr Himmelfarb's second Mill—not only says things which conflict with this principle, but rejects the idea of deriving any valid understanding in politics from a "single truth." In criticism of Comte, for instance, Mill charged him with the fault of

insisting upon only seeing *one* thing when there are many, of seeing a thing only on one side, only in one point of view when there are many others equally essential to a just estimate of it.

THE MOST STRIKING NOVELTY of Mill's essay *On Liberty* compared to other theorists' writings on freedom in what might be called the Lockean tradition, is that whereas they depicted freedom as something to be secured against the constraints

¹ *The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill*. Edited by FRANCIS E. MINEKA and DWIGHT N. LINDLEY. University of Toronto Press and Routledge, London. Four volumes, \$95, £40.

² *On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill*. By GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB. Alfred A. Knopf, \$8.95; Secker & Warburg, £4.90.

³ Especially worth noting are: Alan Ryan, who has followed up his *Philosophy of John Stuart Mill* (Macmillan, 1970) with a more general commentary, *J. S. Mill* (Routledge, 1975, £4); P. Schwartz, *The New Political Economy of J. S. Mill* (Weidenfeld, 1973); and A. M. Quinton, *Utilitarian Ethics* (Macmillan, 1973). See also papers by Ted Honderich in *Political Studies*, 1974; by J. C. Rees in *Political Studies*, 1966, and by Richard Wollheim in *Social Research*, 1973.

⁴ *On Liberty*. By JOHN STUART MILL. Edited with an introduction by GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB. Penguin Classics, 50p.

of the state, Mill represents freedom as something to be secured primarily against the constraints of society. Mill does not say much about political rulers. What he dwells upon is the domination of the individual by unwritten laws, conventional ideas, social rules and the pressures of public opinion:

when society is itself the tyrant—society collectively over the separate individuals who comprise it . . . it practises a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression. . . . Protection therefore against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by means other than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them.

THE WHOLE ES-SAY *On Liberty* is marked by a hostility to society which is not to be found in Mill's other writings. In *Utilitarianism*, for example, he stresses the value of society to the individual, and writes of "the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures, which is already a powerful principle in human nature, and happily one of those which tend to become stronger . . . from the influence of advancing civilisation." Mill calls these social sentiments the firm foundation of morality. "The social state", he adds, "is at once so natural, so necessary and so habitual to man that, except in some unusual circumstances, or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives of himself otherwise than as a member of a body."

Mill is careful enough in *On Liberty* to separate freedom of thought and speech from freedom of action, and to offer a distinctive justification for each. In the first case, he begins by classifying all possible utterances as true, false, part-true, part-false; and then he goes on to argue that the free expression of every type of utterance is for different reasons advantageous, in the sense of being conducive to the diffusion of truth. To

present-day readers this looks perhaps like the crudest part of Mill's case for liberty, so much having been said by contemporary philosophers about "speech acts" comprising activities far in excess of the utterance of true or false (or part-true, part-false) propositions. Dr Himmelfarb, for her part, draws our attention to the contrast between Mill's reasoning here, and what Mill says in his articles on "The Spirit of the Age":

so far from being an absolute good, freedom of discussion appeared, in these articles, as at best a very mixed good, at worse a necessary evil; and rather than furthering the advance of truth, it was seen as hindering, as often as not, the acquisition of truth and still more of wisdom.

Mill's way of pleading in *On Liberty* for freedom of action was to recommend it as a precondition for the development of individuality and character, just as freedom of expression was presented as a precondition for the diffusion of truth. But Mill realised that such individuality might not be universally recognised, as was truth, as something of undoubted value. He understood that the merit of variety had to be demonstrated; and yet he did not do much to demonstrate it. He did, assuredly, commend it as a means of resisting the tyranny



of convention.

In this age [Mill wrote] the mere example of non-conformity, the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break that tyranny, that people should be eccentric.

A little word omitted from this remark of Mill's is the word "some" before the word "people"; clearly eccentric, by definition, is something which only a minority can be. In other places, Mill is obviously recommending freedom of action mainly for the advantage of the few men of genius: "the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius." Mill makes a rather feeble effort to

sound more democratic by adding that the "average man" would also gain from living in his own individual way, not because that mode would be best in itself but "because it would be his own mode."

THIS REFERENCE to the average man living according to his own mode "because it is his own mode" must, however, be read in relation to other parts of the essay. Taken alone it makes the author of *On Liberty* sound more of a champion of *laissez faire* in morality than he actually is. For earlier in the same chapter Mill makes it clear that the average man is to be led by the good and wise minority. What the average man will do is to internalise the "counsels" of the "few", and make those desires his own desires. "The honour and glory of the average man", Mill writes, "is that he is capable of following the initiative which comes from the one or the few...."

THIS ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE the liberty of each with the domination of the wise is closer to Rousseau's argument in the *Social Contract* than it is to any "simple principle" of leaving the individual alone so long as he does nothing which might injure his neighbour. And indeed we have here what looks like a contradiction within the essay *On Liberty* itself, although I myself believe (unlike Dr Himmelfarb) that the contradiction can in a certain fashion be resolved.

Dr Himmelfarb reminds us how forthrightly Mill in those other writings rejects *laissez faire* in morals, and how he turns, like Locke and Kant, to law as an instrument, and not an enemy, of liberty. She quotes a passage in *Utilitarianism* where Mill writes:

For the truth is that the idea of penal sanction, which is the essence of law, enters not only into the conception of injustice, but into that of any kind of wrong. We do not call a thing wrong, unless we mean to imply that a man ought to be punished in some way or other for doing it, if not by law, by the opinion of his fellow creatures; if not by opinion, by the reproaches of his own conscience. This seems to be the real turning point of the distinction between morality and simple expediency.

Dr Himmelfarb aptly observes that Mill, in associating morality with punishment, is here giving it an "existential reality", rooting it in the institutions of society and the state—whereas in his essay *On Liberty* "he deliberately dissociated morality and punishment, leaving morality dependent on nothing more than the 'reproaches' of the individual conscience...."

IN AN ESSAY entitled *Nature*, which was written only a few months before *On Liberty* (though published posthumously), Mill's rejection of

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laissez faire in morals is as unmistakable as it is in *Utilitarianism*. In this essay Mill goes out of his way to oppose the suggestion that men's natural instincts are good; and he criticises those writers who suggest that "every natural inclination must have some sphere of action granted to it" and who think that "all natural impulses . . . ought to be only regulated, not repressed." Mill asserts that "nearly every respectable attribute of humanity is the result not of instinct, but of victory over instinct." Mill's own conclusion in his essay on *Nature* is that while some instincts need to be "tamed and disciplined", others, being simply bad, must be "extirpated."

One would expect a theorist who held these opinions to have strong views on education; and such views Mill undoubtedly had. Even the essay *On Liberty* itself makes it plain that society has the right to interfere with the individual in order to bring about universal education, and, what is more, to control child-bearing itself. Since children are specifically excluded from the class of persons for whom freedom is demanded in *On Liberty*, Mill's plea for compulsory education is not inconsistent with his "single principle." But his plea for the control of marriage and child-bearing is surely at odds with it, the more so since he does not only ask for laws which would "forbid marriage unless the parties can show that they have the means of supporting family", but adds the alternative proposal that society itself should step in where positive law is inexpedient, so that improvident marriage shall be "a subject of reprobation and social stigma." An odd remark to find in a book which seems designed above all to defend the actions, no matter how eccentric, of the individual against the interference of society.

SO FAR AS STATE ACTION is concerned, Mill has often been reproached for dithering between the liberal classical principles developed at length in the text of his *Political Economy* (1848), and the socialist ideas that are added or implied by corrections and footnotes to later editions, modifications that may fairly be ascribed to the influence of Mrs Harriet Taylor, the woman Mill ultimately married. Dr Himmelfarb makes Harriet the key figure in the theory she puts forward to explain the contradictions in Mill's published writing on the subject of freedom. Mill himself declared (though no one believed him) that *On Liberty* was a joint work with Harriet. Dr Himmelfarb goes further and depicts Mill writing *On Liberty* as a kind of scribe and advocate for ideas which Harriet conceived.

⁵ She cannot well doubt that the "popular idea" was also Mill's own idea: "pinched and methodistical England" he calls it in a letter to Harriet (*Later Letters*, I, p. 22).

THE MOST STRIKING PART of Dr Himmelfarb's thesis is her suggestion that *On Liberty* should be read as not a plea for freedom in general but as a plea for the emancipation of women. Dr Himmelfarb asserts, rightly or wrongly (I myself suspect the latter), that society in Victorian England did not intrude so very much upon the liberty of individual men, even in sexual and religious matters. She thinks the "popular" idea of Victorian repressiveness and puritanism a false idea.⁵ But she does think that individual women in Victorian times had their freedom severely limited by social habits and unwritten laws. Hence a champion of women's freedom could fairly see society and tradition as the enemy of that freedom; and so appeal to modernity against tradition in a way that no champion of men's liberty would sensibly wish to do.

Dr Himmelfarb points to a continuity of argument between Mill's essay *On Liberty* and the two essays *The Enfranchisement of Women* (1851) and *The Subjection of Women* (1860-1). These latter are both, of course, feminist tracts. They are usually treated as pleas for the equality of women, but Dr Himmelfarb draws our attention to the fact that the emphasis of these tracts quickly shifts from equality to liberty, equality being seen as a means to the end, which is freedom. The reasoning in both these essays is undoubtedly close to the case for freedom as it is made in *On Liberty*, and it would perhaps make better sense of some passages in the latter if it were read simply as a plea for the emancipation of women. This much, at least, we must concede to Dr Himmelfarb.

It is astonishing, at first reading, to find Mill devoting so much space to what is essentially a negative argument. One might have expected him to concentrate on the positive point, the simple right of every individual to live his life as fully and freely as possible. The positive argument, however, could not be made until the negative one had been disposed of. The most formidable obstacle to the liberation of women, Mill found, was the weight of received opinion and custom which had so long relegated women to a subordinate position. It was this body of opinion and custom that had first to be refuted . . . "universal practice", "universal usage" all told powerfully against women; when these happened also to coincide with the most intense and deeply rooted feelings of men, no amount of rational argument, no appeal to right or justice or reason could prevail. What now made it possible, Mill hoped, for counter-arguments to be heard, was the spirit of modernity.

The spirit which rejected tradition and habit in favour of progress and change was the one hope of women's liberation; and it was for this reason (according to Dr Himmelfarb) that Mill in *On Liberty* made it also the hope of man. She suggests that it was women who experienced

in its most acute form the social tyranny described in *On Liberty*; and since women were the worst victims of the traditional ethos, they could expect to be the first beneficiaries of a new progressive system. It was women's condition of servitude that would be most signally relieved by the adoption of the principles of freedom advocated in *On Liberty*. Dr Himmelfarb goes on to say:

Looked at from the perspective of women, *On Liberty* appears in a new light. For if the situation of women was the single "monstrous contradiction" to the general condition, then mankind, as distinct from womankind, was by no means in an intolerable state; if the conditions of men and women were as dramatically different as Mill made them out to be in the essays on women, if liberty did in fact prevail in the world in sufficient measure to permit men to develop their characters and potentialities in such notable contrast to women, if restrictions and regulations, the tyranny of custom and opinion, had been so effectively diminished for everyone except women, then the message of *On Liberty* seems gratuitous—except of course for women.

Nevertheless *On Liberty* was written, and the reason Dr Himmelfarb gives is that Mill must have come to think that men would not address themselves to the problem of women's liberty unless that problem was made to be men's problem as well. In order to make women's problem equally men's problem, Dr Himmelfarb continues, "he had to redefine liberty, to give it an absolute character which put it beyond the present reach of men. . . . By comparison with the condition of women, that of men might seem tolerable. But by comparison with the absolute standard set up in *On Liberty* both sexes were in the same onerous situation, shared the same disabilities and deprivations. Having given men and women a common enemy—in society, custom, popular opinion and tradition. . . ."

IF THIS WAS INDEED Mill's strategy, it would at least have enabled him to avoid depicting the predicament of women in the terms favoured by our own contemporary Women's Lib writers, who present women's condition as one of slavery to men, something which can only be ended by the rebellion of the slaves against the masters. Mill could present the liberation of women as being as much in the interests of men as of women. If Dr Himmelfarb is right, Mill's aim in writing *On Liberty* was to make a case for the emancipation of women without as much as mentioning the emancipation of women; and by depicting the liberty of everybody as freedom from the oppression of society, forestalled demands from women for freedom from the oppression of men.

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Writing as he did, he could appeal to an audience far wider than any he could attract by writings which pleaded openly and frankly for the rights of women. Feminist tracts were laughed at in Mill's time. As Dr Himmelfarb says: "whether or not Mill consciously adopted this as a strategy, he could hardly have been unaware of the derision that was bound to greet anyone who associated himself with the cause of women." An astute champion of women's rights might well choose devious ways.

Dr Himmelfarb's theory is a seductive one. Put at the very least, it is remarkably clever. Perhaps her exercise might be called Straussian, for in the manner of the late Leo Strauss she has looked behind the incoherences of the superficial or exoteric doctrine for an esoteric doctrine which is both different from, and more coherent than, the surface argument. But unlike Strauss, who looked for material deliberately veiled, Dr Himmelfarb leaves open the possibility that Mill's cunning may have been unconscious. This introduces psychological questions; but here again Dr Himmelfarb is in command of the facts of the case, and full of ideas.

TWO PROBLEMS that most recent writers on Mill have discussed are that of his relationship with his father and that of his friendship and marriage with Harriet Taylor. Dr Himmelfarb raises a third problem, that of his relationship with his mother. In his *Autobiography*, as it is published, Mill is silent about his mother. In the early draft, which was not printed until 1961, there are some words about her, but only ungracious words. Mill describes her as a woman who "unfortunately did not possess the qualities to make herself loved, looked up to, or even obeyed." He speaks of himself as growing up "in the absence of love and the presence of fear." When he revised the *Autobiography* Mill cut out those lines (possibly on the advice of Harriet), with the result that his mother is as conspicuously absent from the story as his father is conspicuously present.

It is not easy to understand this grudge of Mill's against his mother. If he was starved of maternal love, he was in no different a situation from vast numbers of other children of the middle and upper classes in Victorian England. What was peculiar about Mill was not having a cold-hearted mother, but having a father who loomed over every minute of his day, educating him intensively at home, denying him the right to go to school and lead the ordinary social life of a boy. It was not a case of Mill, like Bertrand Russell, being taught by tutors, but of his being taught, like Kierkegaard, by a God-like cruel-kind father.

Perhaps Mill blamed his mother in the way he did because he could not bring himself to blame his father. It might be suggested that Mill was much more normal than Kierkegaard, but I am not sure. Kierkegaard looked a freak and lived like a rich hermit, but he retained his fierce independence of mind. The weakness of Mill is that after a childhood dominated by his father he formed in his manhood a slavish attachment to Harriet Taylor which diminished his intellectual independence and adversely affected his judgment.

FREUD—who translated some of Mill's writings into German to make money when he was a medical student—was one of many readers who have commented on the arid and inhuman nature of Mill's *Autobiography*, but that was before he had worked out the psycho-analytical theories which might have suggested a "Freudian" explanation. Freud (as one might expect) regarded Mill's arguments for the liberation of women as unconvincing, and expressed the usual scepticism about the intellectual powers which Mill ascribed to Harriet.

One odd thing about Mill's extravagant praise of Harriet is how he could have expected anyone to believe his words. Professors Mineka and Lindley print a letter, previously unpublished, to Louis Blanc, dated 4 March 1859, in which Mill writes:

"I do not speak from feeling but from long standing and sober conviction in saying that when she died this country lost the greatest mind it contained."

The one person who would have agreed with Mill in this appraisal was Harriet herself. Mineka and Lindley take a more favourable view of Harriet than does Dr Himmelfarb, but even they comment drily on the revelation that Mill wrote much of his hyperbolic praise of Harriet, not after her death, but during her lifetime, and received her approval for his wording of it. She even left intact Mill's praise of "her most genuine modesty", though (as Dr Himmelfarb notes) Harriet did once carp at Mill calling her intellect supreme and her judgment infallible. Harriet wanted to replace the word "infallible" with "unerring." It is hard to resist the conclusion that Harriet was an odious woman, vain, opinionated, foolish; and that her collaboration did Mill more harm than good.

THE STORY OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP has been told many times. They were a pair of *Seelenfreunden* (Harriet's word), who behaved

like lovers for nineteen years until Harriet's husband, John Taylor, died; then they married. Since they chose, during Taylor's lifetime, to be constantly *en tête à tête*, to travel abroad together, and in other such ways to flaunt Victorian convention, the little detail that they did not actually sleep together (immensely important to their own conscience as that detail was) did not prevent their being ostracised by society. Indeed Mill often took the initiative of cutting with his friends in anticipation of such ostracism. Even after their marriage, they lived a secluded life at Blackheath. Mill did not thrive physically in this strained *Freundschaft*; at an early age he went bald, and developed nervous tics; they took it in turns to get ill. Their experience together makes the animosity towards "society" which is expressed in *On Liberty* readily intelligible. (This is one reason why I am not wholly convinced by Dr Himmelfarb's proposal to read that essay as a feminist tract transfigured.)

Harriet's death, when it came, was a tremendous tonic for Mill. He was able to go out into society again, and renew his friendships. He became a changed man. Dr Himmelfarb makes this point well:

His correspondence provides a dramatic measure of this change, not only in the resumption

of letters to old friends and in the vastly increased quantity of letters to old friends but also in a distinct change of tone. Previously his communications had been full of grievances. He complained to publishers, curtly declined requests for personal information or photographs, was critical in commenting on articles and books, and was wary of solicitations from organisations. Later his letters became good-natured almost to a fault. He wrote warmly to fledgling authors, apologised for not promptly acknowledging an unsolicited manuscript and then managed to find something to praise in it, accepted gratefully the proposals of publishers, put up amiably with the delays of translators and invariably professed satisfaction with their work . . . and in general displayed none of the sensitivity and suspicion that had been so conspicuous during the years of his marriage.

THE ONE CHAPTER in Dr Himmelfarb's book which seems to me unfair to Mill is the last one in which she traces some line, connection, or "tradition" between the argument of *On Liberty* and the ideas of the current radical *avant-garde* or "Counter-Culture", at least in America. Doubtless the exponents of that counter-culture could invoke passages from *On Liberty* which might seem to confirm their views. But surely it is necessary to avoid doing to Mill what people like Bertrand Russell and L. T. Hobhouse did to Hegel: making him responsible for the opinions

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and actions of men who had been inspired by a vulgarised, distorted Hegel.

If Mill's name is to be mentioned in connection with the current counter-culture, with its emphasis on free sexual indulgences, it is worth noting a letter of Mill's written (in February 1870) to Bertrand Russell's progressive father, Lord Amberley, on the subject of sexual passion:

"[Mr Lecky] considers prostitution as a safety valve to prevent the propensity to which it ministers from producing worse evils. Now in the first place, I believe that the propensity has hitherto been fostered, instead of being weakened, by the tendencies of civilisation (which has been a civilisation left mainly to the influence of men) and by the teaching of the Catholic Church, which in order to add to the glory of the 'grace of God', always has exaggerated, and still does exaggerate the force of the natural passions. I think it most probable that this particular passion will become with men, as it already has with a large number of women, completely under the control of reason. It has become so with women because its becoming so has been the condition upon which women hoped to obtain the strongest love and admiration of men. The gratification of this passion in its highest form, therefore, has been with women, conditional upon their restraining it in its lowest. It has not yet been tried what the same conditions will do for men. I believe that they will do all that we wish; nor am I alone in thinking that men are by nature capable of as thorough control over these passions as women are. I have known eminent medical men, and lawyers of logical mind, of the same opinion. . . ."

Moreover, it is necessary to notice that Mill's conception of education was wholly at odds with the current *avant-garde* ideas of free expression or "permissive education." Here we have only to read a letter of Mill to Harriet herself (written in March 1849) on the subject of the Fourierists:

"Admitting the omnipotence of education, is not the very pivot and turning point of that education a *moral sense*—a feeling of duty, or conscience, or principle, or whatever name one gives it—a feeling that one *ought* to do, and to wish for, what is for the greatest good of all concerned? Now Fourier, and all his followers, leave this out entirely, and rely wholly on such an arrangement of social circumstances as without any inculcation of duty or of 'ought' will make everyone, by the spontaneous action of the passions, intensely zealous for all the interests of the whole. Nobody is ever to be made to do anything but act just as they like, but it is calculated that they will always, in a phalanstère, like what is best. This of course leads to the freest notions about personal relations of all sorts, but it is, in other respects, a foundation on which people would be able to live and act together. *Owen* keeps in generals and only says that education can make everybody perfect, but the Fourierists attempt to

show how, and exclude, as it seems to me, one of the most indispensable ingredients. . . ."

NOTHING, IN FACT, could be more alien to Mill's way of thinking than the anarchistic radicalism of the *avant-garde* today. Such radicals may cite his words, but they are words which meant very different things to Mill. Both may call for the freedom of the individual against the constraints of conventional society. But the new radicals, when they speak of "freedom", think simply of everyone "doing his own thing", following his inclinations, seeking instant gratifications; whereas Mill, when he spoke of "freedom", thought of each man following his own way to self-perfection. The ambivalence of Mill's attitude to liberty is less baffling if we remember that when he recommended freedom for the individual, he was not proposing that everyone should be unconstrained in doing what he liked. By the word "freedom" Mill—like Montesquieu and Kant—meant being unconstrained in doing what one ought to do. In a letter to Sterling, Mill told his friend "taking reason for your safety lamp, and perpetually warring with inclination, then you will attain that freedom which results only from obedience to right and reason. . . ." And although Mill set great store on the beneficent effects of the "religion of Duty", he did not expect the majority of men as yet to want what was right and so to be capable of experiencing freedom. When he spoke of the "individual" Mill was not thinking of any Tom, Dick or Harry, he was thinking of mature personalities capable of subordinating their passions to reason. If women excited his admiration, it was because more women than men had already proved themselves capable of controlling their passions, and living by the light of duty.

Where Dr Himmelfarb sees "two Mills" I can still see only one. I think that the contradictions in his arguments are no more ruinous than those in Arnold and Locke; that many of the difficulties flow from Mill using words in a rather different way from that which his readers might suppose. And if some of the paradoxes originate in Mill's putting in things to please Harriet Taylor even though they conflicted with his own considered beliefs, others are simply due to the paradoxical character of the world with which Mill was dealing. As Voltaire said: "*Plus on voit ce monde, plus on le voit plein de contradictions.*"

Medieval People

Views of Biography—By EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH

IN OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE, biographies are a paradox. Readers love them; professional historians often deplore them; and the publishers go on churning them out. Having just succumbed to the temptation to write a biography (not to be published till next year), I find my mind bubbling with perhaps heretical thoughts about it all.

On my desk at the moment I have three recent lives, all accounts of royal and medieval personages, and therefore directly comparable with one another. Medieval biography is a particularly arcane and, one might almost say, algebraic form of biographical endeavour, and not only because so much of the material is in Latin. Or so it might seem at first sight. It is also a testing ground for historical method. Nowhere else is the hierarchy of sources so obvious, or so easily demonstrated. What do you trust? First and foremost, the source not written with history in mind, but contemporary with the event: it may be a legal document or an accountant's record of payments. Next, the contemporary chronicler, perhaps even an eye-witness of what he describes, but nevertheless pleading a case to posterity. Last, the great mass of secondary sources—hearsay reports, written down a generation or so later; books by earlier researchers into the subject. It sounds technical, and it is.

Yet anyone who plunges into this great mass of material is soon impressed by the fact that a small proportion of it has incomparable vividness. I have just re-read the trial of Joan of Arc (who is my own chosen subject), and that of her contemporary, Gilles de Rais. Joan's trial is, for obvious reasons, the most famous record of its sort, and its qualities have been appreciated not merely by specialists, but by dramatists such as Shaw and Anouilh, and film-makers such as Bresson. Phrase after phrase imprints itself indelibly on the mind. Joan, asked why her standard, and hers alone, was carried into Rheims cathedral when Charles VII was crowned: "It had had the trouble, and it was right that it should have the honour." Joan confronted by the torturer and his instruments, in the great tower of Rouen castle: "Truly, if you tore away my limbs, and separated my soul from my body, I would not say anything different to you; and, if

I did say something, then afterwards I should always declare that you made me do it by force."

The record of Gilles's trial contains material which is just as dramatic. Here is his farewell to Francesco Prelati, the rascally Italian sorcerer who had been his lover. A man who fell through believing in everything thus took his leave of someone who believed in nothing: "Good-bye, François, my friend! Never again shall we see one another in this life. I pray God to give you good patience and knowledge, and be certain, if you have good patience and hope in God, that we shall see one another once more in the great joy of Paradise. Pray God for me, and I will pray for you."

One can well see that material of this kind sits uneasily within the framework provided by academic history, which has tended so much to devalue the individual, and to minimise his influence upon events, preferring, rather, to seek a kind of inevitability in economic causes. And yet, of course, the human appetite for what is essentially and visibly human remains, and biographers are tempted to cater to it. Regine Pernoud is a well-known French expert on Joan of Arc and her times. She has written a book called *Jeanne devant les Cauchons*, and another about the siege of Orleans. She has also created a kind of scrapbook biography of Joan, fitting together the sources to make a continuous narrative. Her new book is neither polemic nor collage, but deals, in a relatively conventional fashion, with a slightly earlier period of French history. It tells the story of Blanche of Castile, the mother of St. Louis.¹ I use the phrase "tells the story" quite deliberately because, of all the books in front of me, it is the one which most openly concerns itself with old-fashioned narrative. Mlle Pernoud's ideal is not so far from that which possessed some of the chroniclers she draws upon. Like them, she writes from an orthodox Catholic viewpoint.

Despite the *bondieuserie*, the book is easy reading. Too easy, perhaps. What is one to make of a passage such as this, which occurs in one of the earlier chapters?

Being a woman, she would often be hurt, upset and taken in. But her very woman's intuition would also more readily let her distinguish between those whose appeal she might welcome and those she must turn away. It would let her focus on what was essential, see more than what was directly in front of her. Also at times—and here was the secret compensa-

¹ *Blanche of Castile*. By REGINE PERNOUD. Collins, £4.95.

tion for her solitude—her own glance would cause anxiety where there was good reason, create respect where it was lacking, calm or quicken the feelings of others.

The author, one sees, is treading water. And one sees, too, that she has a curious view of the personage she is writing about. *Blanche of Castile* is professional in that it deploys the techniques of the professional historian. It has a bibliography and an apparatus of references. Some of the material used by the author is previously unpublished. But does the judgment of character convince us for a moment? The tone is too often that of the serial-story in a woman's magazine—*Battling Blanche Wins Through*.

DR MALCOLM VALE's new biography of Charles VII of France—Joan's dauphin—is a very different affair.² It is the first biography to be published in English, and by far the most serious study of the king to have appeared since Beaucourt's massive six-volume work came out at the end of the 19th century. It is also remarkably gun-shy in a number of different ways.

Dr Vale begins his preface with the ominous sentence: "This book is not a conventional biography." As one soon discovers, what he means is that he has little ambition to write narrative, and feels himself to be ill-equipped for it. The book is therefore an uneasy compromise between a character study and a series of essays on administrative, economic and political aspects of the reign. To quote the author himself: "It takes a contemporary assessment of Charles VII both as king and man for its starting point. Within a broadly chronological framework this assessment is set against the surviving evidence. It is hoped that a picture, albeit an impressionistic one, will emerge in which Charles VII is the central figure in what is often a group portrait."

The "contemporary assessment" to which Dr Vale refers is that of the court chronicler of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, Georges Chastellain. It is therefore a verdict penned for a man who was both Charles's relative and his rival. On the other hand, the chief Burgundian historians of the period, Chastellain and Enguerand de Monstrelet, are intelligent and vivid writers, and it has always been recognised that works such as theirs are amongst the chief cultural legacies left to us by the Burgundian state which rose and then dissolved with such rapidity under the rulership of four Valois dukes.

Chastellain is a phrase-maker with a certain flair. His summary of one aspect of the king's character may demonstrate this:

There were frequent and diverse changes about his person, for it was of common occurrence that, in the fullness of time, when a man had been raised very high and close to himself, right to the summit of the wheel, then [the king] began to grow weary of the situation, and, at the first opportunity that gave some colour to it, willingly tumbled him down from high to low.

What we have to remember is the degree to which Chastellain's fascination with his own literary art may have distorted the verdict—quite apart from his Burgundian sympathies. He is proto-Renaissance in the way in which he deliberately tries to create a portrait in words—a formal "character", where all the elements are arranged to produce the most striking effect. Behind Chastellain, we hear the echo of classical writers, such as Plutarch, to the extent that we may think his king appears to us, not naked, but wearing a Roman cuirass.

Dr Vale is less keenly aware of this than he is of Charles's own position as a proto-Renaissance prince. He reads the king in the light of his son and successor, Louis XI, and seems to see him as a kind of prophetic sketch or model for the fully developed Machiavellian despot. This leads him, curiously enough, to minimise Charles's changeability and extreme dependence upon favourites, despite the emphasis placed upon this aspect of his behaviour not only by Chastellain but by other witnesses to the King's life, such as the anonymous diarist called the *Bourgeois de Paris*, who says that his courtiers ruled Charles "as if he were a minor in wardship."

It is significant that Vale criticises Beaucourt, his predecessor, for perpetuating a notion put forward by Chastellain which he himself rejects. It is that of a turning-point or series of turning-points in Charles VII's reign. He traces Beaucourt's own descent from Chastellain through Bossuet: "Metamorphosis under the impact of changing political conditions is his *idée fixe*"—an *idée fixe* related in turn to that of a far from mutable moral order. But it is also possible to find in Beaucourt's fat tomes something other than this. Despite his conservatism and his Catholicism, the French historian could not escape the tone of his time. He is a "naturalistic" historian in the sense that Zola is a naturalistic novelist—the swarming detail that fills his pages is more than a mere concession to the 19th-century taste for long books and brute fact. This new biography of Charles VII eschews Beaucourt's attitudes without finding anything very striking to put in their place. The narrative sweep has gone. We are asked to renounce Beaucourt's rather mechanical conception of the dynamics of character in favour of—what? Surely not for something even more rudimentary?

Yet this indeed, apart from the lack of narrative

² *Charles VII*. By M. G. A. VALE. Eyre Methuen, £7.25

impetus, is the main fault of the book. It is not only that the author seems increasingly doubtful as to whether he ought to be writing a biography at all—so much so that we get the impression that he feels he is committing an immoral act by pouring the results of his researches into the shoddy container of biographical form—but one also gets the impression that his view of how human beings behave, of the way they respond to the pressure of individual needs and desires, is more than a little hazy. If Mlle Pernoud reduces Queen Blanche to the level of bland domestic cosiness, Vale's Charles VII becomes so vague in outline that there is no reason to be interested in him—that is, unless one is already a student of the period.

The sources, on the other hand, forcefully present a psychological conundrum. The son of a hysterical, strongly phobic, neglectful and at last bitterly hostile mother, and the putative offspring of a father whom we should now recognise as grossly schizophrenic, Charles VII was both more and less than life-size. Almost as phobic as his mother, acutely uncomfortable if stared at by strangers, especially if these appeared in the midst of a familiar group, he nevertheless charmed most

people by his graciousness. His submission to his favourites seems to have been entirely self-aware. When his constable, Artur de Richemont, imposed the gross and overbearing Georges de la Tremoille upon the court, Charles remarked: "You give him to me, cousin, but you will regret it, for I know him better than you." It was a prophecy that promptly fulfilled itself. The fascinating thing about Charles is not Machiavellianism, but a much subtler kind of manipulative weakness—that of a sick child in the midst of a group of robust and strong-minded adults.

To explain Charles, one has to put forward some kind of theory of personality, however rudimentary. One may note, for example, that his indifference to the misfortunes of his friends—to be seen, most notably, in his reaction, or lack of it, to the capture and trial of Joan of Arc—has a close resemblance to the lack of affect which has been observed by modern psychiatrists among the children of schizophrenic patients. By treating this kind of thing as outside his scope, Dr Vale seriously cripples his book.

CHARLES ROSS's biography of Edward IV is, in a plain, no-nonsense way, by far the best of the trio.³ The reasons seem partly due to the nature of the material, and partly to the approach

³ *Edward IV*. By CHARLES ROSS. Eyre Methuen, £9.50

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adopted by the biographer. One reason why he can treat the reign as "a study in the power-politics of late medieval England" is that Edward himself was a straightforward character, interested in power and success, though relaxed enough to indulge in numerous, mostly sexual, peccadillos. An attractive extrovert, he was afflicted by curious lapses of judgment. These lapses caused not only the period of crisis when he himself was driven from the throne, but the turmoil that followed the king's death. As Dr Ross points out, the central paradox of the reign is that Edward, though so successful in his own lifetime, should nevertheless have failed to secure a peaceful succession for his son.

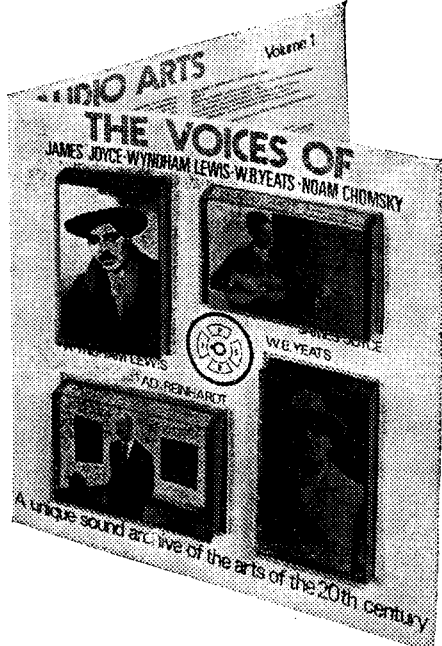
Because this is a good book, it is perhaps a fairer yardstick for the failures of the historian *vis-à-vis* biography and of the biographer *vis-à-vis* history. Dr Ross, as a distinguished professional historian, presents the rather external, official kind of portrait which we might expect. We never get a glimpse of the king's inner life. The nearest we come to the rakishly picturesque is the moment at which the author actually seems to encourage us to believe that the Duke of Clarence—"false, fleeting, perjured Clarence"—was indeed drowned in a butt of malmsey, just as it happens in Shakespeare. It may be argued that an external portrait of this kind is all the source

material allows, unless the author is prepared to skate on the thin ice of unjustified conjecture.

Nevertheless the book amounts to an admission that the personal factor *is* important in history. If Edward IV had been a different kind of man, the events of his reign would have followed a different pattern. Indeed, since he was an usurper, we may speculate that there might have been no reign at all, despite the hebetude of Henry VI.

From my own point of view, I found the book afflicted me with what I can only describe as nostalgia—a nostalgia for the Oxford of the early 1950s. At that time, undergraduates reading modern history were discouraged from taking too close an interest in the Wars of the Roses. The excuse generally given was the lack of good basic textbooks: the gap was not really filled until the appearance of E. F. Jacob's *The Fifteenth Century* in 1961. But beneath this reluctance one detected a more deeply rooted resistance and disapproval. The period did not seem to be susceptible to what those who taught us described as "rational explanation."

PERHAPS THE GREAT CHALLENGE of biography as a genre is the confrontation that it enforces with the capricious and the irrational.



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In addition to the three books I have been discussing, there is before me a fourth—Richard Vaughan's *Valois Burgundy*.⁴ It is a boiling down of four previous volumes, one devoted to each of the Valois dukes. Perhaps surprisingly, this re-hash makes a more favourable impression than the more ambitious works from which it derives. Where they were plodding and stodgy, though immensely informative, this is crisp and terse. To my prejudiced eye, however, one of its most

interesting features is the way in which the book changes course. From describing the organisation of the Burgundian state, Professor Vaughan is forced to turn his attention to the astonishing personality of the last of the four Valois rulers. Charles the Bold thought of himself as another Alexander; and, in his overweening pride, he pulled the whole ramshackle edifice of Burgundian sovereignty down about his own head. It does not lessen the irony that he was a theoretician of the use of power, an intellectual who stood in contrast to his more pragmatic predecessors. He failed as a ruler, but succeeded in being remembered. Which matters more?

⁴*Valois Burgundy*. By RICHARD VAUGHAN. Allen Lane, £5.50

Spies, Spies, Spies

Intelligence Tested—By CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON

THERE IS A CHILDREN'S GAME called *Attaque*, which in Britain at least has been popular for about half-a-century. It is an extremely simplified form of chess, based on an amalgam of Boer War and First World War tactics. The pieces of cardboard, their blank backs facing the "enemy", are numbered from 1 (*immovable flag, the capture of which ends the game*) to 10 (*C-in-C*) and each can attack and destroy a weaker number, a major being stronger than a captain and so on. There are also minefields, immovable as the flag and totally destructive to any enemy save a sapper (*No. 3*).

Into this rather rigid order of battle there is inserted a single civilian, vulnerable to all save to the enemy *C-in-C*. Indeed he alone can destroy the opponent's *No. 10* unless the *C-in-C* blunders into an enemy mine. This is a slinky-looking fellow—the soldiers are all dressed in immaculate service-dress, 1918-variety—with cloak and no doubt with dagger, glancing as well he might over his shoulder. I played this game as a child, I play it occasionally with my own children now, and I can seldom recall *The Spy* having fulfilled his function, since he is almost invariably in the wrong place to kill the enemy commander. But he is clearly a very dangerous fellow, and it is quite right that he be shot on sight by even the lowliest of his opponents. And since his back is

blank he cannot even be turned around to kill his own *C-in-C*.

Such, roughly, has been the situation of the Spy in the confrontations between major powers since this excellent game was first invented and since cypher-breaking combined with depth analysis of enemy intentions and enemy order of battle became the basis of intelligence—to which must now be added air reconnaissance and satellite telescropy. The natural habitat of the Spy was seldom the corridors of power leading to the chancelleries of the world; and now he is more usually to be found in the casting offices of film and TV companies.

For the Spy is not a solitary figure, a James Bond or even a Kim Philby, sent on a series of missions any one of which may be vital, may involve the murder of the Top Enemy. He is part of, and controlled by, a very large organisation in the service of his country's enemies. He is usually regarded with justified loathing by his compatriots and with a measure of contempt by his employers. Much of his activity is mere cover work. The agent merely reports what the experts already know: but this knowledge those experts would far sooner ascribe to the brilliance of Agent X than to the mathematician who had broken the cypher. As a result, secret agents are in general highly expendable from everybody's

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ROUTLEDGE

point of view. The people who matter are not the spies, but the more important intelligence officers who evaluate what the spy reports, fit this microscopic stone—if it be judged genuine—into the mosaic, or sometimes realise that the agent is in fact working for the enemy or potential enemy too.

In effect the spy, particularly in the pre- and post-World War II period, approximates more to the stereotypes of John le Carré and of Len Deighton, sad, dingy, frightened figures far removed from Richard Hannay or even from the incredible Bulldog Drummond. Seldom does a spy shoot the enemy's C-in-C, though it is possible that the Nazi secret service may have arranged that Stalin execute Marshal Tukhachevsky in 1937 (possible but, in the opinion of this writer, unproven and improbable). Nor is the spy often in a position to steal state secrets. We do not know what Herr Guillaume extracted from Chancellor Willy Brandt: little one may assume not already known to the Soviets; on the other hand, his "discovery" by the West German security forces made evident the myopia of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Perhaps the Russians wished to end the *détente* hypocrisy, anyhow; still, if I were Comrade Guillaume I think I should prefer the long-range prospects of German to Russian jailers in the many years to come.

THE LATE GENERAL MORAVEC was not, or only very occasionally, a spy.¹ He created the Czechoslovak intelligence service in the early 1930s and ran it for the better part of twenty years, in Prague and in exile, and then again briefly in Prague, until his country was finally conquered by the Soviet enemy. Intensely patriotic and three times an exile from the land he loved, he died in America before completing this book of memoirs. (Did he die a natural death? His son, who put together what he had written and expanded his notes, believes so. Therefore so must we. But the *K.G.B.* most certainly does not appreciate the appearance of such first-hand accounts.) His tone is cool and factual, yet there are large gaps that only he could have filled.

His autobiographical passages are fascinating and highly relevant to the appalling century into which we foolishly plunged ourselves. In 1914 he was studying at the university under Thomas Masaryk, *pater patriae* of a country then conquered for three centuries. Reluctantly conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian Army, he soon deserted to the Serbs and thus to the Imperial Russian army, but he was no Good Soldier Schweik. His unit was one of the few that

¹ *Master of Spies: the Memoirs of General Moravec*. Bodley Head, £3.50.

managed to be evacuated via Vladivostok when the Russian Revolution broke out. (His description of the Russian soldiery milling about, not knowing where to go or what to do, is a vivid comment on Lenin's apophthegm about "voting with their feet.") He fought on the Western Front, and at last returned to his own country, so weirdly and disastrously constructed by President Wilson and those others at Versailles. In order to decrease German numerical superiority over themselves the French had insisted that the inhabitants of the Sudetenland be issued with Czech papers, and the Czechs treated them as 2nd- (or at best as 1.75-) class citizens. Hungarian (and, inexplicably, Polish) minorities were thrown in. *The Slovaks had little love for the Czech majority.* Far in the east there were some Ukrainians; and on the German border, largely manned by Germans, was the greater part of Czechoslovak industry including the huge Skoda armaments complex, at that time the largest in Europe, even larger than Krupp. There too, and for obvious reasons, the frontier fortifications were built in conformity to natural defences. A more absurd perversion of Wilson's cliché about national self-determination would be hard to find.

Bismarck had remarked, probably incorrectly even for his own generation, that he who controls Bohemia controls Europe. Who in fact did control Czechoslovakia once Masaryk had gone? So far as the Czechs were concerned, it was an impeccable democracy. The Slovaks too had a considerable say in their own government. But the other built-in peoples were in permanent minority—comparable to that of the Roman Catholic minority in the Six Counties of Ulster in 1975—and looked across the borders for friends. Czechoslovakia was in effect ringed with enemy states and relied for its security, even for its existence, on its French alliance and on the Covenant of the League of Nations. Its bosses were men of some (but not much) quality, the principal being Eduard Benes. He was a sociologist by profession, at one time a professor in that strange "science" at the University of Chicago.

Such was the country in which General Moravec, then a major, became chief of intelligence first of the Czech First Army in 1929 and a little later head of intelligence. He very rapidly found that there was virtually no military and precious little political intelligence at all. Still, in this book criticism of Dr Benes is muted to little more than a diminished seventh. Moravec had understanding, and he must have had great personal charm. As chief of intelligence he occupied, in Prague, the still luxurious offices that had once been presided over by an Austrian intelligence officer called Colonel Redl.

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OF THE TWO SORTS of operational spies one might be described as the "internal", the other and far less dangerous as the "external." This one is the essential character in the ever popular spy story. The plot may be summed up as follows: a character with an initial in lieu of a name: an iron-jawed, fearless, and highly ingenious agent. The former instructs the latter, laconically, to go to a distant capital and steal or photograph highly classified documents. Three hundred pages later, after incredible tales of technological, quasi-military, and above all what passes for expert sexual derring-do, he returns to his iron-jawed initialised boss with the thing, the microdot, the film, whatever it may be. End of novel, beginning of movie.

² In fact this Czecho-German double agent was a certain Paul Thunel of the *Abwehr*, known as "Frantas" to the Czechs; a young man in the early 1930s, resident in Prague and with expensive tastes. He had joined the Nazi party very early (card no. 61,574) and had been employed by the *Abwehr* since 1928, becoming a regular officer in 1933. He was arrested by the Gestapo in 1942, and executed in April of 1945. According to Barton Whaley, *Codeword Barbarosse* (M. I. T. Press, 1973), his Czech spy-master was in fact Moravec himself. Why, then, the mystery of his identity? Presumably because "A54" is more appealing to the reader than Herr Thunel or his alias, "Dr Steinberg."

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Does it ever happen? Perhaps, very occasionally. Mr Montgomery Hyde, in his book called *Cynthia*, published in 1965, described how this fashionable demi-mondaine inserted herself—naked, for some reason I have now forgotten—into the top-secret vault of some Washington embassy. *Cicero*, the British ambassador's valet in Ankara in 1943, may have stolen secret papers, which may or may not have been planted; in any case the Germans paid for them in bogus currency. The Austro-Hungarian Colonel Redl sold secrets to the Russians before the First World War, was discovered, and committed suicide in 1913. Neither the plans of the Austro-Hungarian nor of the Russian general staff were changed; the Russians might as well have paid him in bogus schillings. In Redl's office in the 1930s sat Frantisek Moravec, an officer who rose in rank to that of general. He became head of the Czechoslovak intelligence service, developed a profound distrust of his country's French allies and of the Soviet's intelligence service. He reported directly to Dr Benes, who when not running his country was again employed as an academic in Chicago; Benes retained an unswerving belief in his French alliance and his Soviet friends.

Moravec did indeed have a spy, in Germany, of apparently unusual reliability, with access to much secret information. His German agent was clearly a staff officer in a sensitive position. He began his relationship with Moravec, quite cynically, for money. The information he sold was, apparently, very accurate, but ignored both by Benes and by the French. The plans of the German general staff rolled forward, exactly as reported to their future Czechoslovak victims. Yet amazingly this mercenary spy continued to supply Moravec, in exile, with information for which the Czechs were no longer able to pay him. Nor does Moravec identify him save as "A54", and it is incredible that he had not found out who his man was even then, even more so that he should retain discretion after 1945—a brief consultation of the captured German archives should make this anonymity ridiculous. But of course it adds spice to the book.³

Was "A54" an agent of the *Abwehr*? It would seem probable, and this would also explain his unpaid "anti-Nazi" activities after 1939, for the intelligence he supplied to the Czechs does not read like the information available to the Nazis' own *Sicherheitsdienst* before they took over the *Abwehr* in 1943. The whole operation, in effect, was pointless, save in so far as it kept Moravec happy that he was doing his job; it certainly had no effect on the outcome of the War. No more, for that matter, did *Cicero*'s.

Perhaps this is an explanation of why politico-

military espionage has fallen out of fashion and into fiction. Technological espionage, on the other hand, is too boring for fiction, but what we learn about their technology and *vice versa* is undoubtedly more important now than ever before. Any young man interested in espionage as a career should first master maths, physics, and large-scale engineering.

MILES COPELAND's much publicised book about the United States Central Intelligence Agency can only underline this point.³ At the time of writing the C.I.A. is under investigation by two allegedly highly-powered official American committees, the one Presidential, the other Congressional. It has long been under close examination by such quasi-official committees as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the American and foreign TV companies, and Mr Jack Anderson. What is still known, for some reason or other, as "the Left" has cast it in the role of the villain, responsible for the world's evils from Indo-China to Chile and beyond. With Nixon gone, the C.I.A. has become the bull's-eye of anti-Americanism both inside and outside the United States. This supposedly secret organisation is now about as secret as Marlon Brando's sexual organ or most of the fashionable movie actresses' breasts; with its cover blown, it is just about as interesting, too. Miles Copeland's work is neither a breach of security in any save the most pedantic sense, for there is almost nothing still left unseen for him to reveal. In fact it may be assumed that the C.I.A. is dead. It is probable that it was replaced long ago by a really secret American intelligence service, for no great country, indeed no society, can long survive without one, when faced with an implacable enemy determined upon its destruction. (Indeed the over-publicised *K.G.B.* may provide a model of what must be in essence an interchangeable "cover" organisation. Who remembers the *Cheka* or shudders at *Ogpu* or *NKVD*?)

Before and during the Second World War, the American intelligence services in Europe were of small value, and compared to those of the British quite negligible. (The reverse seems to have been the case in the Pacific war.) The much glamorised Office of Strategic Services enjoyed an inflated reputation; but as an officer on the receiving end of G-2 at 12th U.S. Army Group I can testify that the amount of useful information we derived from O.S.S. was virtually nil. This was of course known to its inventor, General "Wild Bill" Donovan, whose nickname was characteristic of the Hollywood-type flamboyance that the

³ *The Real Spy World*. By MILES COPELAND. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £3.50.

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Michael Joseph

Americans then found suitable for allegedly secret operations in a war that was, for some of the American public at home, being won by Errol Flynn. General Donovan was not like that, of course. An extremely shrewd lawyer, he realised that a drastic reorganisation of the whole United States intelligence apparatus was essential, in view of Russian intentions after the war against Germany had been won, since there was no certainty (nor even desirability) that the U.S. government should or could continue to rely upon the British. The result was that the C.I.A. was set up in 1945-1946, being modelled partly on the German but principally on what were then believed to be the British models.

However, the institutionalisation of so elaborate a business as politico-military-naval-air-and-technological intelligence (and counter-intelligence) is excessively complex. Although German intelligence had been in general rather poor, particularly when the Nazi security services under Himmler engorged Admiral Canaris's naval-military and in part anti-Nazi *Abwehr*, it was schematically more neat than the older and more flexible British model. The American compromise tended towards the German system, as indeed was so much American academic thinking influenced by German or perhaps German-Jewish experience. A simplistic formula was the basis. It can be briefly summarised as follows. The Federal Bureau of Investigation would be charged with general security, the rule of law, within the United States where the C.I.A. was not to operate. The C.I.A. was responsible for espionage and other forms of secret activity abroad (*i.e.* sabotage, propaganda, and political activity generally). The most clandestine forms of intelligence and counter-intelligence, such as cipher-breaking, were the responsibility of the National Security Agency.

⁴ For an ex-official's assessment of the record, see the article by Harry Rositzke, "America's Secret Operations", in *Foreign Affairs* (January 1975).

These did not concern, and are scarcely mentioned by, Miles Copeland, whose book is about the C.I.A. and its activities during the so-called Cold War with Soviet Russia and, at times, China. History has shown, and this book explains why, the tasks entrusted to the C.I.A. were beyond its capacity. Its combinations of functions were mutually destructive and led to its practical paralysis. This point of divided functions is inadequately stressed in Miles Copeland's book. As with any such an intelligence agency, its failures were and are glaring, its successes usually secret.⁴ One immense success, which did not remain secret, was the obtaining of Nikita Khrushchev's so-called "secret speech" denouncing Stalinist methods, at the 20th Congress of the C.P.U.S.S.R. in 1956. Without the C.I.A. this might indeed have remained a secret.

AS THE TITLE OF HIS BOOK implies, Miles Copeland, with suitable reticence, concentrates on what should have been the primary purpose of the C.I.A., namely espionage. At this "the Company", as it is familiarly called, would seem to have been moderately successful. It had the sense seldom to send American spies abroad, but to rely on native enemies of the foreign régime (in Communist countries an almost inexhaustible pool upon which to draw). It is, however, far too early to make a balance sheet of success or failure in this field. The triumphs of the hostile critics of American society, sometimes unaware of their actions, cannot be compared on any scale now known with C.I.A. activities in China or Russia. The Cold World War is still undecided: and it has certainly not ended by manoeuvres about SALT or *détente*, both mere psychological weapons. On the other hand one can presume that American espionage has had many great successes against enemies that are almost pathologically security-conscious (to the extent that their excessive awareness of secrecy has on occasion interfered with their own internal efficiency).

In so far as its ancillary activities as a propaganda organisation go, the C.I.A. can hardly claim any major triumphs. In an earlier book, *The Game of Nations* (1969), Mr Copeland has described his attempts to persuade the more important Arab countries, Syria and particularly Egypt, that in exchange for Yankee know-how in the intelligence field they adopt American, *i.e.* non- or anti-communist, modes of government. This was only a very small element in the naïve American belief that what was good for General Motors was good for Colonel Nasser. The immense Afro-Asian project of the 1950s and '60s was an almost total failure, culminating in the Indo-Chinese wars and America's only major

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defeat in history. In so far as its overt propagandist activities are concerned, the C.I.A. has made itself intensely unpopular and not least within the metropolitan United States. To put it bluntly, it has spent a great deal of money buying the wrong foreigners. This very course of action has demeaned the image of the Statue of Liberty to that of the waxwork Lenin in his famous Moscow "Tomb." No country "liberated from colonisation" to the hurrahs of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt has chosen American-style democracy as its political way of life, save very briefly, in one entire generation. Israel and the Republic of India are, for very different reasons, highly peculiar nation-states; apart from these none of the new states in Asia, Africa or the Middle East, and very few in Central or Southern America, has opted for parliamentary representation by open, universal suffrage. Meanwhile, in its political activities, the C.I.A. has managed to give the enemies of America almost a mirror-image of the Soviets' *K.G.B.* However, and through the world, the *K.G.B.* with the obvious full backing of successive Soviet governments has been blotting out, in country after country, the "open societies" which the C.I.A. has intended and has failed to protect. Of course there was very little freedom in any of the countries of Eastern Europe, South-east Asia or South America, but what there was has been effectively stamped out, or is being stamped out, by varying sorts of Communists. Apart from two or three minor coups in South America, the C.I.A. has no battle honours comparable to Tanzania, Budapest, Prague, Saigon, Pnom-Phen, Havana, Iceland, Finland, and certain British trade unions. Even as a technical espionage organisation it seems to have been repeatedly taken by surprise.

IN THE THIRD FIELD which was foolishly assigned to the C.I.A. thirty years ago, that is to say the field of "operations", its record (as Mr Copeland shows) is quite deplorable. In the Second World War the trumpeted and exaggerated triumphs of the British "Special Operations Executive" inflamed the cinema publics. But an intelligence organisation is not, by its very nature, equipped for combat. The C.I.A., under a new President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, cannot be altogether blamed for the fiasco known as the "Bay of Pigs." On the other hand it was essentially a C.I.A. operation and a C.I.A. plan. Even under a more competent and forceful President, it would probably have failed, as did almost all the British S.O.E. and similar American O.S.S. operations in the Second World War. But from this disaster the C.I.A., as an intelligence

organisation, has never recovered. Indeed its discredibility has become apparent even to such single-minded, muck-raking journalists as Jack Anderson, to his and their immense financial gain. But again it must be stressed that clandestine operations are what the words imply. When they succeed the Jack Andersons do not know of them; it is the failures that get into the papers.

Is there an American intelligence service at all? Let us hope so, for our survival, yours and mine, may at some time or another depend on its efficiency. And let us hope that neither you nor I, let alone the *Washington Post*, knows what it does nor even what it is called. The Congress in its present mood will not like this ideal, for it implies that certain matters of supreme national importance should be kept secret; and there are no votes to be won from secrecy. On the other hand there can be no democratic votes at all after too long a series of national defeats. Such, at least, is what the late General Moravec discovered. And this discovery is highly relevant now to all our few surviving Western democracies. To the uninformed optimist there is some reason to believe that whereas both the C.I.A. and the *K.G.B.* are moribund front organisations, the real intelligence services of the West are once again superior to those controlled by the Soviets. If so, however, the margin must be slim.

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SPORTS

Winning at All Costs

Between Gentlemen & Conquerors—By BRIAN GLANVILLE

BY THEIR SPORTS shall ye know them? The merit of Paul Gardner's informative and entertaining book¹ is that he realises as much, and has tried to use spectator sports as a paradigm, to examine the psychopathology of American life.

Clearly they can tell us something. It must, for example, be of great significance that the violent, brutal and highly regimented "game" of American football should in the last decade have gained such a grip on the national imagination while baseball, previously the national sport, freer, not violent, individualistic, has waned. By the same token, the fact that cricket has been overtaken in England by Association Football as the national sport clearly reflects the changes in our own society. To reconcile the vastly differing appeals of baseball and American football, which Mr Gardner does not try to do, would tell us a great deal about the ambiguities of the American psyche. Put in very simplistic terms, one might say that football stands for the American obsession with violence and *machismo*, baseball for the obsession—or obsessionism—with statistics.

It is almost as instructive to consider what sports the United States has rejected. Cricket, which preceded baseball in popularity, was one of the first—predictably too aristocratic and genteel. Soccer has been another—acclaimed and accepted all over the world, spurned and snubbed in the United States. Mr Gardner has an amusing and well-founded chapter on the attempt to impose professional soccer, of an ersatz kind, on a reluctant American public in 1967. Since then, the sport has been growing greatly among the colleges and schools, but it is an alien and uncertain transplant, and can never, now, develop the mythology of baseball and football; the necessary pantheon of Ty Cobbs, Red Granges, Babe Ruths, Joe Di Maggios, Joe Namaths.

Mr Gardner has great and legitimate fun with the presumptuous, impatient millionaires who

barked their toes and lost their money on the realities of the sport and its problems. There is no disagreeing with him when he says

Throughout the entire *contretemps* . . . there was one extremely relevant point about which a tactful silence was maintained by all sides. This was that the whole concept of sport as a business enterprise is totally alien to the spirit of organized soccer

—an observation which, as Mr Gardner knows, has far wider implications than for mere soccer. Once again, however, he has not attempted an analysis. Nor one of Soccer's unpopularity.

Perhaps it is to some degree implicit in his showing that the Americans have tended, with sturdy xenophobia, to reject any major sports of foreign provenance, carefully inventing a native history for baseball, which in fact had its origins in Britain.

There is more to it, however, than that, and more to it than the evident objection that soccer is insufficiently violent, that the manly occupation of "hitting" people, far from being central, is positively frowned on. Soccer's continuity, its lack of inevitability, has something to do with it. Thus, the Americans seem to prefer sports in which the action is staccato, in which there are constant "times-out", when hot dogs and Coca Cola may be consumed. They also seem perturbed—some relic, perhaps, of their Puritan past—that soccer should be so capricious; that a protracted, sophisticated, painstaking movement, begun at one end of the field, can come to grief at the other with a goalkeeper's save, a miss by inches, a hitting of the post or the bar. This, notionally, can also happen in the hugely popular sport of basketball, but in basketball scoring is easy, an attack will as often as not end in a "basket." In soccer, it is tantalisingly difficult.

Mr Gardner might further have developed his brief reference to Ring Lardner's baseball stories, and the currency of the American demotic in sports journalism. Something of what sport has meant to the American imagination can be found in American literature. Baseball, so far, has had much the better of the argument. There are Ring Lardner's letters from a bushier, *You Know Me, Al*,

¹*Nice Guys Finish Last*. By PAUL GARDNER. Allen Lane, £3.50.

his famous short stories, *Hurry Kane*, *My Roomy* and the rest, Bernard Malamud's *The Natural*, in which, so to speak, the mythology of baseball is mythologised, Robert Coover's *The Universal Baseball Association*, in which baseball is seen as compensatory fantasy, baseball as statistical obsession. That baseball retains at least something of its hold was shown, less happily, when Philip Roth made it the subject of his turgid *The Great American Novel*. Like Malamud, he exploits some of the more bizarre incidents of baseball history, such as the use of a midget batter (first adumbrated by James Thurber) but there is none of the same sly sublimation of the facts.

When Lardner's baseball tales were appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, he was named one of the ten best-known men in America. It is depressingly instructive to compare them with the most widely successful sports novel of recent years, Dan Jenkins' *Semi-Tough*, which deals, or purports to deal, with the world of American football. It is in terms of popularity and implicit ethos alone that the two are worth comparing; in literary terms there is no comparison at all. Lardner was an artist, Mr Jenkins is a sports journalist who has found and exploited a fertile theme. Lardner had an artist's detachment, presenting his toughs and cowards and braggarts and wild men for no better than they were—if with sympathy; Mr Jenkins is in there fantasising with his hero Billy Joe Puckett and the rest.

Semi-Tough (1972), is, quite specifically, a revolting book, and its success is truly disturbing. To say that the novel is not realistic is not in any sense to place it in the category of those by Malamud, Coover and Roth, whose preoccupation is with legend and fantasy. Mr Jenkins' is with sheer adolescent daydream. He has built on the life styles popularly attributed to such as Joe Namath, the New York Giants quarterback with the fallible knees, of whose tribulations over gambling and Mafia associates Mr Gardner tells us.

The exploits of sadistic toughs are celebrated. Orgies are described in obscene and gratuitous detail. One takes place the night before a Super Bowl! Women are degraded into the merest sexual objects; with the telling exception of Barbara, girl friend of the hero's friend, and eventually his own, who remains serenely untouched and cool amidst the surrounding squalor. The adolescent dream, the splitting process, is complete.

THAT A BOOK as trivial, vulgar and shallow as this should have such immense appeal and currency is perturbing, but indicative. It tells us

something about the wish fulfilments which accrete around American professional football, embodied in such a figure as Joe Namath, pure pleasure principle, one who has, on the surface, had effortlessly the best of both worlds; a football hero who can drink and fornicate on the night before a Super Bowl match, who can run a dubiously successful bar in Manhattan, consort with gamblers and *mafiosi*, yet still, as a supreme quarter-back, throw the passes that win the big games.

This is not entirely a day-dream, for its realisation is in part made possible by the arcane specialisation of American football. As Mr Gardner explains, unlimited substitution has led to a situation in which a player can trot on to the field, kick a field goal, then trot off again. Unlike such an obviously analogous figure as George Best, whose excesses were his undoing, a Namath does not have to run; simply to throw. Let his knees lock, and his locomotion seize up: if he can stand and throw, then all is well.

But throwing and specialising are not the essence of the game. It is, as Mr Gardner chillingly shows us, "hitting" people. Football of all kinds is codified violence; there are always elements to be seen of that "bloody and murdering" practice that was royally condemned by kings in the English Middle Ages. Soccer has some of them, Rugby many more, American football alone scarcely bothers to conceal them. "Slugging" was an integral and original part of the game, as was "hacking" in soccer, and it was just as difficult to get rid of.

From slugging, it was no very long step to the "flying wedge", when all eleven players in a team, the ball carrier in their middle, galloped like an infantry charge at the foe. In the 1905 season, it is no surprise to learn, 18 players died, 159 were badly injured. Mr Gardner quotes quite damningly:

You get in a good lick around the head area, it rattles the man. You can beat a dazed man easier than an alert one. It's that simple. (Chris Hanburger of the Washington Redskins)

If I can hit a man hard enough so he has to be carried off the field, I'll be glad to help him off. (Deacon Jones of the Los Angeles Rams)

That the game has always been brutal and has long been played is less important than that it should, with its military overtones, have become so overwhelmingly popular.

Mr Gardner points out perceptively and alarmingly that its ethos is not only accepted by millions of Americans, but accurately reflects their society. President Nixon was forever talking about his Vietnamese "game plans", and wanted the implacably authoritarian Green Bay Packer coach, Vince Lombardi, to run as his Vice Presi-

dent. Darrell Royal, Chief Coach at the University of Texas, whose football programme has been exposed in Gary Shaw's *Meat on the Hoof* as a horrible morass of sadism, exploitation and regimentation, has been held up as an example by the State Governor.

The progression from football player to soldier is logical enough, for the particular quality of football that most stirs the patriot's heart is its avowedly Spartan, quasi-military discipline.

This quality certainly shone through George Plimpton's popular, Mittyish book, *Paper Lion* (1966), a somewhat discursive account of his experience training with the Detroit Lions; the world which emerges is palpably nastier than he seems to have known or intended.

The only book with any real literary claims inspired by football is Frederic Exley's *A Fan's Notes* (1968); a fictionalised memoir of enormous energy, some pathos and much anguished humour, whose investigation of the fan holds good by analogy for almost any Western country. Mr Exley's admiration and identification, moreover, are saved not for any 250 pound brute but for the elegant runner Frank Gifford of the New York Giants, his contemporary at USC. The drama—in the Italian sense—of being a fan, the need to live at second hand, the need for compensation and comfort, are poignantly brought out by Mr Exley; but it is significant that his hero is crushed, flung into the air like a doll, at Yankee Stadium by a vicious block, to cause a crescendo in the story.

Mr Gardner tells us of the National Football Foundation, which came into being in 1954 awash with generals and businessmen, its object

to help football maintain its rightful place not simply as a sport, but as an integral part of our nation's educational pattern, a vital force in preparing American youth for the competitive business of everyday life.

Some time in the late 1950s, American football came to London's Wembley Stadium—two U.S. Air Force teams—and as I watched it from the Press Box, a middle-aged Cockney, watching too (he was not a journalist), said scathingly, "Just like the Yanks in the war. All brute force and numbers. . . ." There is, indeed, this strain to be found in American life, derived perhaps in part from the violence of the country's development and expansion, in part from its very strength and size.

You will deduce that it is no coincidence that a novel such as *Semi-Tough*, which celebrates football, should adopt such a "male chauvinist"—to use that slovenly term—attitude to women. The football game is clearly a masculine refuge, and those who have indicted it with "Fascism" do have some case; there's the same aura of

heroic, exclusive, male companionship and valour; of authority blindly accepted; of permitted mayhem.

Football, as Mr Gardner perceives, leaves no space for humour—unless it be the tiresome locker-room humour of Mr Jenkins' players; or Mr Plimpton's. Baseball is more open, simple and humane, far more individualistic. As Mr Gardner suggests, one cannot imagine football, with its silly solemnity, finding room for anybody like Casey Stengel, the famous malaprop, and his New York Mets, still less for Bill Veeck, who sent a midget batter to the plate, initiated a rocket-firing scoreboard, and put his players into miner's helmets as a protest against inadequate floodlighting.

The story of the Mets, who were taken to the bosom of New York City precisely *because* they were losers, does something to redress the bleak balance of American sport which Mr Gardner presents. It was, after all, a baseball manager, Leo Durocher, who coined the saying, "*Nice guys finish last*," even if it was a football coach, Vince Lombardi, who said, "*Winning isn't the most important thing—it's the only thing*."

THE GREAT ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, in which most of the major team sports were developed, knew better than that. They appeared to sense that competitive sport was a form of ritualised, sublimated violence, and that the sublimation might easily break down. The importance of being a good loser is one far more radical and realistic than Lombardi's; without good losers, or at least disciplined losers, most of the body contact sports and many others besides become quite literally unplayable.

It was the public school ethos, again, which saw to it that even when a sport became professionalised, a core of altruism was needed, were it to succeed even in its own terms.

COMPETITIVE SPORT is bedevilled by the paradox of *playing* and *winning*. To which may be added the further paradox that professionalism, under certain circumstances, can encourage a sense of objectivity where amateurism can subvert it.

There is no question that sport, as such, has by definition been perverted and distorted. Yet where did distortion begin? Certainly not with the Leo Durochers, the Vince Lombardis, even with the armchair enthusiast who invented the Flying Wedge. One may look back to the Ancient World, at the corrupt and violent history of the original Olympic Games, to see that our own age has no monopoly in such distortions. They have always, quite clearly, been implicit. Sport in itself

represents diversion, recreation, enjoyment; even self-fulfilment. Competition means, in the last analysis, aggression—which, ideally, should be sublimated in sport. All body contact sports are, to a greater or less degree, bloodless versions of conflict. When the sublimation breaks down, as it so often does, then there is actual fighting, actual violence. In sports such as American football, ice hockey, Rugby football or Rugby League, the threshold of tolerance is very high. Permitted violence is even an accepted part of the game. In soccer and basketball and cricket, it certainly exists, hovering beneath the surface; but it is not an intrinsic element. Indeed, one of the most frequent causes of violence on the soccer field is the frustration of a clever piece of play by an unfair obstruction, a trip, the tug of a shirt, not necessarily very harsh or violent in itself, but maddening for the fact that it has frustrated a delicate manoeuvre.

American football arguably responds to elements in the American ethos; the obsession with success, the contempt for failure (which doubtless has its roots in early Puritan attitudes), the addiction to violence. Where “hitting” is of such paramount significance, aggression is out in the open. Skill, too, certainly exists; but (as in Rugby football) it may be said to *co-exist* with the presence of physical force.

WHAT THE PROPONENTS OF WINNING AT ALL COSTS tend to forget is that sports live or die by adherence to the rules. In the 1960s, it really did seem for a time that the Argentinians were going to force soccer into its death throes. There is a schizophrenic quality about their football. Traditionally, they have always been half saint, half centaur; wonderfully skilled footballers with vicious tempers and brutal propensities.

When, in the latter 1950s, they were thoroughly overhauled by their old neighbours and rivals, the Brazilians, by comparison with whom their football seemed slow and old-fashioned, they decided to become more royalist than the king, *i.e.* more pragmatic, rationalised and cynical than the most committed Europeans. Once chiefly concerned with playing the game, they became obsessed with stopping the other people playing, an aberration which came to crescendo in the World Cup quarter-final match at Wembley in 1966, when they opposed England. Their team was a splendidly gifted one; man for man, without doubt better than England's. From the first whistle, however, their preoccupation was simply to stop the English playing by bodychecking, tripping, pulling shirts. Eventually the little West German referee, Herr Kreitlein, sent the tall captain, Antonio Rattin, off, for following him about the field, protesting. For a time, it

seemed the whole Argentinian team would follow their captain; but eventually they stayed on the field, England won 1-0, and their manager, Alf Ramsey, said that he hoped England's next opponents “would not act like animals”, words which have rung down the years.

In the matches which followed, Argentina's club champions dealt viciously and ferociously with their European opponents in the Inter-continental Championship, to the extent that three were thrown into gaol by the general-President after their excesses against Milan in 1969. Things, thank goodness, have now changed.

THE SICKNESS OF OUR PLEASURELESS TIMES, in which pain seems to invade our very pleasures (trust athletics to invent the concept of “the pain barrier”) is starkly shown up by the Olympic Games.

Running, jumping, throwing are unquestionably, in themselves, pleasurable activities. Until the Olympiad of 1936 (which the Nazis used for blatant propaganda, and whose team became the first to indulge heavily in weight training), there was some relevance to De Coubertin's maxim that the important thing was “not winning but taking part.”

Since then, the policies of strength-through-joy in the Iron Curtain countries, the dishonest fiasco of athletics scholarships in the United States, the sinister rise of the “Svengali coach” (as prevalent in swimming and gymnastics) have obviously led to a set of attitudes which have nothing to do with sport or self-fulfilment.

But it would be a serious mistake to lay all the blame on competing power blocs. The truth is that the most dangerously deluded athletes are (in David Riesman's phrase) the “inner directed” ones—those from countries, like Britain itself, where athletes have never been battery-grown for propaganda purposes. Some of the most obsessed and obsessional runners of our time have been British, and they were amateurs only in the sense that they reluctantly had to make money at some other pastime. If “amateurism” should stand for love of what one does, then love has long since flown out of the window. “Pain and sacrifice” are proclaimed and celebrated. The ludicrous insignificance of the end is lost sight of in the means—which now include the final lunacy of anabolic steroids; chemicals which are known to induce cancer, shrinkage of the testicles, the growth of superfluous hair on women, and the like. At first they were taken only by the athletes in the so-called “heavy events” (the shot, the hammer, the discus). Now, they are taken by a majority of international athletes in every event. Tests have been developed to prevent their use in major competition; but there is little or nothing

to stop them (athletes being as foolish, coaches as deranged, as they are) being used in the long periods between.

In this context, the healthier scepticism of the professional athlete can be seen as a safeguard. His sport is also his job. This may not be an ideal situation, may indeed be a contradiction in terms, but it may at least prevent such excesses.

Moreover, though most team sports now, at the highest levels, reflect the mechanisation and the over-organisation of our society, there is a growing, encouraging movement in European soccer at least to take the game away from the coaches and give it to the players. This is an ambition which in American football, with its play-books, its para-military rationalisations, its endemic violence, would scarcely be possible.

IT IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN the Black Sox Scandal of 1919, when the Chicago White Sox "threw" the World Series, which put Ring Lardner off baseball for good. Mr Gardner (though I am sad to see he does not quote the small boy's apocryphal remark to Shoeless Joe Jackson on the courthouse steps, "Say it isn't so, Joe") is most interesting about the background of the affair.

Certainly there was no exonerating the White Sox players, whose greed was paralleled only by their ingenuousness, but Mr Gardner shows that their attitude merely reflected the grimy realities of baseball at large. Club owners knew that games were being fixed, but feared to do anything about it in case the prestige of the sport should suffer. Charles Comiskey, the owner of the White Sox, was notoriously mean, and had cut the players' salaries that very season.

The trouble was, as it is in football, that there was no truly independent body to administer the sport. Any central authority was merely the Club Owners writ large. Though they were frightened enough by the Black Sox Scandal to bring in Judge Mountain Landis as Commissioner to purify baseball, the club owners did not really change their spots. In 1958, the much loved and long established Brooklyn Dodgers were simply and brusquely moved 3,000 miles west to Los Angeles.

There are other ways in which the *mores* of big business pervade American sport. The reserve clause, which ties baseball and football players to their clubs in perpetuity, and allows them to be transferred without right of choice or appeal, is an astonishing survival in a land supposedly dedicated to free enterprise. Even when the English Football League was at its most feudal, its players at least had the privilege of saying not only whether or not they would be sold to any

given club, but whether they would be transferred at all. Yet when a related issue went before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1972, that august institution ducked its responsibilities, and equivocated on the grounds that "baseball had operated on the assumption of exemption for so long that things should be left the way they were."

MORE SINISTER STILL is the way that the universities have been corrupted by their use as nurseries for professional sport. On the face of it, the American habit of insisting that all aspiring professional athletes must go to college, rather than join a club at the age of fifteen or sixteen as they would in Europe or South America, appears sound. The "Children's Crusade" run by Europe's professional soccer clubs becomes more damaging and cynical every year. It is not merely the fifteen-year-olds who have been swept out of a formal education, to gamble their futures on the possibility of success; it is the eleven-, and twelve- and even ten-year-olds who have been seduced by talent scouts to think only of a career in football, to fritter away their time in class, to stake everything on the hope that they will become professionals.

But as books like Mr Gardner's and books like *Meat on the Hoof* show, the college athlete, especially if he be a black athlete, often leaves university as untutored as when he arrived. Gary Shaw, who himself had a football scholarship to the University of Texas, reveals that the educational programme for footballers is a shallow farce, that if anything serious concentration on studies is discouraged. Of course this is nothing new. Mr Gardner appositely exhumes James Thurber's famous college football player of sixty years ago, who could not name one means of transportation; and there are those memorable others who could not tell you the colour of blue copper sulphate or who wrote Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

The system is also an outright restraint on the freedom of young athletes, who are forced to serve out their years in college, because the professional football clubs maintain a closed shop against those who do not. The poison, moreover, spreads. It was in 1951 that Senator Fulbright accused the colleges, under pressure from the alumni, of "using any means to gain their ends": winning football and basketball matches.

They corrupt not only the hired players but also the entire student body who learn from their elders the cynical, immoral doctrine that they must win at all costs.

If nice guys indeed finish last, it may be worth reflecting that a greater moralist than Mr Durocher suggested that the last would finally be first.

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Portuguese Notebook

By H. U. Kempfski

1. Mario Soares

"STRANGE", said Mario Soares, looking like a man still embarrassed at really believing the idea he had just referred to; it seemed only just to have occurred to him. The Portuguese Socialist leader, relaxing in an armchair, discussed it quietly, concealing his acute anxieties. It was two a.m., we were sitting in a corner of the reading room of the Grand Hotel do Porto, and he thought that the time had come to confide to a reporter his forebodings. In the aftermath of the fiasco of General Spínola's mini-Putsch the revolutionary officers governing the country had led him to suspect that they were engaged in handing over the ten million inhabitants of Portugal to the Communist camp.

There was no doubt at all in his mind that that was the aim of the Communists. He was now convinced that they wanted to turn Portugal into a "people's democracy" on the East European pattern. That alone was sufficient to alarm the secretary-general of a socialist party which, for all its left-wing orientation, credibly maintained that its ideas were social democratic and libertarian. But what he found most alarming was his gnawing suspicion that the Soviet Union was in agreement with the activities of the Portuguese Communists. "Strange", he said, "that Moscow does not put a brake on our Communists here. . . ." He appeared as disconcerted as a man who feels forced to look a totally unexpected truth in the face, and he repeated, now almost inaudibly, "Very strange."

Soares is considered a politician of inter-

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national rank. He returned from exile in April last year after the young officers' coup brought about the collapse of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship that had deprived the Portuguese people of political responsibility for some forty-eight years; and he became Foreign Minister. He did his best to bring about the decolonisation of the Portuguese territories in Africa, and he did this so swiftly and apparently so smoothly that since then he has enjoyed the reputation of being an artful diplomat. He is aged fifty, an impressive figure inclined to corpulence, a lawyer, something of an historian and philosopher, and likes creating the impression that he is an innocent enthusiast and certainly not a fighter. But he has since shown that he knows how to fight, and in the role of popular orator he creates a quite strong impression.

More than 20,000 people had rallied to listen to him opening his election campaign in Porto. He did this without regard for the Army officers who had announced a two-week postponement of the opening of political campaigning for the election of a Constituent National Assembly and, though he completely accepted the assurance that the postponement of the election would only be brief, there could be no denying that his speech was a challenge. Without bothering about the demonstrability of the claim, he declared, with an undertone of threat: "We are the biggest party of free Portugal, without us the country cannot prosper!" His 38% share of the vote—compared to the Communists' 12½%—proved it.

The place where the meeting was held could in itself be regarded as a challenge. In the first place, holding a mass demonstration for democratic socialism in Oporto instead of in Lisbon, where officers were installed in the centre of power, was in itself a symbolic act; for Oporto, the commercial city built on granite in northern Portugal, is traditionally a bastion of libertarianism and republicanism; and not long before a delegate conference of the newly-founded "bourgeois democratic" Centre had been violently broken up by Communist hooliganism.

The Socialist posters proclaimed the slogan "BUILD A FREE COUNTRY." The Portuguese for free is *livre*; in big, white capital letters it stood out so boldly from the rest that it might have been a synonym for a new earth and a new paradise. "Freedom" in present-day Portugal has already become an ambiguous notion that already sounds very different to many from what it sounded during the demonstrations for liberty last year, when the Portuguese were carried away by unbridled "revolutionary" hopes. But there was no emotionalism in the atmosphere when the people streamed into the huge, semi-circular concrete hall misleadingly called the

Palacio de Cristal. The mass audience appeared to create its own excitement, and people were soon cheering. But the expression on nearly all the faces I could see was calm and collected. When they raised their left arms and clenched their fists to cheer Soares' visions of victory, most of them looked as if they were trying to fight some secret anxiety by noisy enthusiasm.

The meeting ended, as in a persecuted religious community, with the singing of a "hymn." More than 20,000 intoned the new Socialist anthem but, as all the eight verses are not yet generally known, the words had to be read line by line from the printed page. Not enough copies were available, and groups gathered round those who had the text. Though the anthem contains no explicit reference to Communism, the chorus seemed to be castigating that deviant form of socialism that moves violently in the name of liberation into dictatorship.

SOARES, TOO, DOES NOT MENTION the Communists. So long as he has been willing to accept them as a partner in the Government under military control, more discreet language is obviously required, in spite of his opposition to them. But this causes him, like a preacher denouncing sin, to use the word *livre* with mounting anger. After all, the country is in danger of completely losing its limited political freedom; the Communists control the trade unions and the police, they have a dominant position in the mass media, and they are increasingly successful in indoctrinating the armed forces. He suggested that they knew that they nevertheless could not count on securing more than 15% of the votes in the 25 April elections (they managed 12.5%), and predicted that there might be an effort to manipulate them or to prevent them by a *coup*. As an example of methods that might be used to circumvent undertakings given, he cited the nationalisation of the banks. But wasn't this part of the Socialist programme too? Still, only three weeks previously an agreement had been reached with the Communists that the economic situation would justify such a step in three years' time at the earliest. What had happened under Communist pressure he described as premature and ill-considered, in fact a grave error; for urgently needed foreign investment would not now be available, the flight of native capital would be accelerated, transmission of the savings of one and a half million Portuguese living abroad would cease, and unemployment would grow. . . .

This illustrates the dilemma facing the Socialists. Against their convictions, they retrospectively approved the nationalisation of the banks. They did so because any protest on their part would, they feared, "not be understood" by

most of the electorate. Soares admitted that the majority were naïve enough to suppose that taking this action against the banks would "eliminate all the evils of capitalism at a stroke." To the applause of passers-by, the words *banco do povo*—"People's Bank"—were scrawled in red letters on bank windows, and only a sophisticated urban minority regarded this bit of revolutionism as anything but an "experiment" that was doomed to failure.

HOWEVER JUSTIFIED Soares' anxieties may be, they are matched by uncertainties on the Communist side. There is no lack of evidence of their genuine fear that one day they might well be ousted by the military faction. They want to provide against this eventuality by establishing bases of power, to show the Army officers that Portugal was not governable against their will. Are the Communists already in a position to paralyse the Revolutionary Councils by a general strike? The answer I found was unanimous. All those in a position to form a qualified opinion say that the answer is "definitely no."

Alvaro Cunhal, the Portuguese Communist leader, is regarded as a Moscow loyalist of Stalinist vintage. In contrast to his comrades in Italy and Spain, he has never deviated from the theory that a "Popular Front" is the best way of legally bringing the Communists into power in the West. Cunhal, as he now openly demonstrates, counts a great deal on "auxiliaries"—either willing fellow-travellers or cover organisations. A cover organisation of this kind (led by a radical left-wing Catholic) had been brought into the Government to strengthen the Portuguese Communists.

Speaking unequivocally for himself, Cunhal made it quite clear that there was no possibility of a Western-style democracy or a Parliament in Portugal.

In an interview published in the weekly magazine *Europeo* (6 June), he said Portugal faced the choice of having a strong reactionary government or a strong communist democracy. When asked about the April 25 elections for a Constituent Assembly, he said:

"The elections have no importance for me, nothing. If you think that the question can be reduced to percentages of votes received by one party or another, you are deceiving yourself badly.

"If you think that the Socialist Party with its 40% and the Popular Democratic Party with its 27% make up the majority, you are making a mistake. They do not have a majority."

Senhor Cunhal added: "The Constituent Assembly will certainly not be a legislative organ, it will certainly not be a chamber of deputies."

IF SOARES DESCRIBES ALL THIS as "strange", it is not only because it diminishes the chances of an "historic compromise" (the alliance between Communists and Christian Democrats in Italy) and delays the leftward process in Spain. He also wonders why Moscow permits a state of affairs in Portugal that seems to him to endanger the *détente's* "relaxation of tension" throughout Europe. In private conversation he inclines to the view that Moscow *wants* a "strategy of conflict" that, for reasons that are still obscure, might lead to American intervention in Portugal. He is not to be dissuaded by the difficulty of reconciling this analysis with the present climate of world politics, but insists that "an American intervention is possible." If events in Portugal disturbed the United States even more than they were bound to in any case, this would, in his view, amount to a crisis greater than that in South-east Asia. To make Lisbon rather more pliable, for instance, the Americans might try supporting the independence movements in Angola, the Cape Verde Islands and the Azores, which would painfully affect Portuguese interests. To my question whether all this did not seem just a bit too fantastic, he replied with significant glances, like a man compelled by higher obligations to say no more.

But he could not be so specific that night on when and how the twenty-four Army officers of the Revolutionary Council would react to his conditions. He was not willing to sacrifice renewed Socialist participation in the Government because he himself was to give up the post of Foreign Minister to become Minister without Portfolio; and he had also put forward other demands. Only one ministerial post to go to the Communist auxiliaries being given representation in the Cabinet. The Liberal *PPD*, which is "Social Democratic", must be assured that Communist denunciations of it as "Fascist" will cease, and it must not be hampered in its political activities. The Minister of the Interior must be an officer whose personality would be a guarantee of strict neutrality and who had authority to take steps against any irregularities in the polling and after.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND the question, of course, arose why Soares had no thought of abandoning a partnership with the Communists that had become so fragile. It would, he confessed, expose his own party to a test for which it was not yet ready. "The people would just not understand it", he said. To make his meaning perfectly plain he added: "The revolutionary spirit among the people is still too strong." In other words this means that the Socialists are having difficulty in facing up to a special ideological problem. Having formed an "anti-

Fascist Front" with the Communists under the Salazar dictatorship, they now feel they would lose credibility if they and the Communists did not now jointly hold out the promise of radical change. They also fear they would not quite be able to cope with Communist agitation against them. Another important consideration is that the officers have not, in the opinion of the masses, broken their promise to help re-establish democracy in Portugal. Even their opponents do not deny that the Armed Forces Movement of the revolutionary officers, the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* or *MFA*, is probably more popular than any junta elsewhere in the world. If the Socialists took up a position in opposition to the Government, the people would regard them as hostile to the officers. Finally, Soares has to take into account what is perhaps the decisive factor: the Revolutionary Council is by no means homogenous, and which group will gain the upper hand remains to be seen.

BY NOW IT WAS three in the morning, and the night waiters in the Grand Hotel do Porto had long since ceased serving. Soares rose, and turned to friends who had been patiently waiting for him in another room. No, he said in parting, the cause of liberty was not yet lost. This was in reply to my question whether, in spite of all considerations to the contrary, there was not a great temptation to abandon such a position of humiliating subjection. He said that as a politician he knew very well that there was no more unpardonable mistake than making a decision too late. "Now it would be too early", he added after brief reflection, with a knowing smile that did not betray whether his language was bolder than his heart or mind or whether he was escaping into a promising and convenient fantasy.

2. General Goncalves

MANY FRIENDS OF YOUR COUNTRY, *Mr Prime Minister*, are increasingly alarmed at political developments in Portugal, especially at the role of the Communist Party. The Communists seem to be the politically dominant force. How has that come about?

GENERAL VASCO GONCALVES: The friends of Portugal can be completely reassured. I shall give them a non-party answer. Any objective observer will quickly discover that the Communist Party does not control our country. The centre of power is now the *Movimento das Forças Armadas*, the *MFA*.

It is often claimed that you yourself are close to the Communists. It is also claimed that you have

been a secret member of the Communist Party from the old days. This is a very personal question. Are you a Communist?

GONCALVES: I could answer yes or no, but no one will get me to do so. A basic principle of the Armed Forces Movement is to refrain from partisanship. Abiding by that principle is one of the foundations of the unity of the armed forces. The officers by whom the Revolution of 25 April last year was carried out have promised that they will not ask one another what their party political position might be.

Nevertheless I should like to repeat my question.

GONCALVES: Why do you ask me whether I am a Communist? You might have asked me whether I am a Socialist. Because the leaders of the Portuguese Socialist Party claim to have a Marxist line, just as the Communists do. But I repeat, no one will persuade me to depart from our agreement not to discuss party political trends. The only object in doing that is to break up the unity of the Movement of the Armed Forces. The MFA is ready to accept all ideas that are not against the interests of society and of the country, of course including those of the Communists, whose political dynamism is necessary. I myself am MFA, and that is the truth and the whole truth.

A year ago the Movement of the Armed Forces promised to introduce democracy into Portugal. What kind of democracy are you thinking of, Mr Prime Minister? Are you thinking of a "people's democracy"?

GONCALVES: Our enemies talk of a people's democracy, but we do not have any such ideas.

Do you have other models?

GONCALVES: No, we have no models. Our concern is to take into account the special conditions of our country. We want to find a way

that leads to Socialism, if possible without great convulsions. But people are politically and ideologically ripe for it.

The Movement of the Armed Forces is quite obviously critical of the political parties existing in Portugal. Are you disappointed by the parties?

GONCALVES: I never thought I should see such party conflict. I believed that the parties had learned their lessons from the time of Portugal's First Republic and would abide by them. Well, unfortunately they have not learned a great deal. So we have a difficult coalition, surely the most difficult in all Europe. It extends from the centre to the Communists. Nevertheless it is important for the establishment of democracy in Portugal that these forces form a grand coalition.

Do you think it possible that one day the MFA, disappointed by the parties, might aspire to the foundation of a single party?

GONCALVES: No, because it is important in a democracy not to form a single party.

Since the Movement of the Armed Forces has established itself as an independent political force, I should like to ask you how long the armed forces wish to exercise their role?

GONCALVES: We are thinking of a temporary solution. Our movement is to be institutionalised in the new constitution as a kind of motor. When the new constitution is ready, that is, towards the end of the year or thereabouts, there will be another provisional period under the leadership of the Revolutionary Council. That period will then last for about three to five years, three rather than five, in my opinion. During this transitional period the moving role of the Movement of the Armed Forces will have to be respected.

And after three or five years? Will the officers then go back to their barracks?

GONCALVES: Yes, they will then go back to their barracks—if the conditions have been created.

What is the process by which decisions are reached in the Supreme Revolutionary Council at the present time? Are they taken by vote? Has every vote the same weight?

GONCALVES: In the first place, discussions take place in order to find a solution that can be supported by a majority. Unanimity should prevail in the Revolutionary Council. When there is no unanimity, of course, a vote is taken, and every individual has his own vote.

The nationalisation of the banks and insurance firms in Portugal has alarmed foreign investors. Can you give any guarantee that will make it worth while for future foreign capital to be put into Portugal?

GONCALVES: There will continue to be a wide field for private firms in Portugal. After all, West

"I'd Rather Be Left..."

Lisbon

PORTUGAL'S Constituent Assembly meets for the first time today. It is to draw up a new constitution before the end of the year when it will be dissolved and more elections held for a legislative assembly.

The make-up of the Constituent Assembly is 116 Socialists, 81 centre-Left People's Democrats, 30 Communists, 16 centre-Democrats, five fellow-travelling Portuguese Democratic Movement, one extreme Left Popular Democratic Union, and one independent conservative from Macao.

There has apparently been much squabbling over the seating since nobody wants to sit on the right.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Germany invests in the Socialist countries. Why should the Federal Republic, or any other country, not invest in Portugal? You ask about a guarantee. Yes, we give that guarantee, and it applies to the whole Movement of the Armed Forces—we don't talk with a forked tongue.

I now come to foreign policy, Mr Prime Minister. Portugal is a member of NATO. Is all that to be changed?

GONCALVES: The programme of the Armed Forces states that all treaties will be observed, and that is precisely what we shall do. Change could be brought about only by the Portuguese people. But we are well aware in which part of the world we live; we know our geographical position. Of course we do not want to see Europe divided up into blocs. We want peace, we want it ardently, though not at any price.

What are your relations with the Soviet Union?

Are they good relations or special relations?

GONCALVES: We have only recently established relations with the Eastern European states. We are also engaged in establishing relations with the African countries. Our objective is an open policy with all countries, whether Western, Eastern, or Third World. We want to be left in peace by everyone, so as to be able to follow the path to the progress that we seek. In our relations we shall not give a privileged position to any country.

Mr Prime Minister, can you imagine any situation in which the United States might intervene against Portugal, directly or indirectly?

GONCALVES: I repeat, we know our geographical position. We want to live in peace and quiet, we do not want to intervene anywhere, for which in any case we do not have the power. But we are a nation with an 800-year-old history. Our

Military Commissars

LAST YEAR, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) introduced a wholly new command structure, Copcon, under the flamboyant Brigadier Otelo Carvalho. Bypassing the traditional military hierarchy, Carvalho selected for Copcon duties units and troops known to be loyal to the radical officers of the MFA. By determined leadership, and higher pay, he has made them the only law and order force with any credibility in Portugal at present. Copcon are now used not only to break strikes and demonstrations, but for police duties such as making arrests and controlling crowds.

Their loyalty to the Nato alliance is more doubtful. It was a Copcon artillery commander who told the "Sunday Times" recently: "If Nato gives me an order to fight with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, I will not fight. Maybe my company and I go to the other side. It's ridiculous today that we are part of Nato."

In March the Army, particularly the cavalry, was further purged, with dozens of officers arrested or sacked. Earlier this month it was the Air Force's turn. Its chief of staff, General Mendes Dias, was fired and a young Left-wing pilot, 34-year-old Morais de Silva, was given his job with a promise to rid the Air Force of its Right Wing—a promise which led some Lisbon wits to wonder if under those circumstances the Air Force could still fly.

Then 10 days ago the Supreme Revolutionary Council quietly dismissed the entire 2nd division of the general defence staff, the intelligence division. In its place they have created a new "information service" under a council member, Captain Ernesto Macedo, with a hand-picked staff who will feed information to the Council alone and not to other branches of the armed forces. The new service is expected to play a prominent part in warning the council of potential dissent within the armed forces.

MEANWHILE, THE MILITARY has inserted itself into one area of public life after another. Apart from

finance, all lay ministries are now under the command of military officers. Last month they sacked the entire town council of Portugal's second city, Oporto, and put a military team in its place. They have the power to appoint representatives to the editorial staffs of every newspaper.

Despite the clear statement in the Armed Forces Movement's original programme affirming the "independence and dignity of the judicial system", the military are now also claiming representation on all juries.

In addition, the Revolutionary Council, though clearly embarrassed by the overcrowded jails, is making no overt effort to bring prisoners to trial. Apart from the hundreds of former PIDE agents still held in Caxias, there are now estimated to be more than 700 "political prisoners" in Portugal. This is more than three times the number held by the former regime and released at the time of the coup last year.

Although they include many prominent businessmen and Right-wing politicians (some of whom, like General Kaulza do Arriaga, are still influential enough to secure their unpublicised release) the number from the far Left is already past the 350 mark.

THE MOST BIZARRE development, however, has been the proposal to establish loyal militias "for the defence of the revolution" in communities all over the country. The scheme, the idea of Admiral Rosa Coutinho, is seen as putting some punch into his proposed local revolutionary committees—which will in turn "supersede the political parties." One of the Revolutionary Council's wilder characters, Major Varela Gomes, was sent to Cuba in April and the new proposals appear to be based on ideas gleaned from Castro's army. . . .

Simon Jenkins

in the SUNDAY TIMES (London)

country has the oldest frontiers in all Europe, and we are very patriotic, and therefore we expect that there will be no foreign intervention. But, if that were ever to happen, we should fight for our national independence. In concrete terms, I am convinced that the United States will never intervene in our domestic affairs.

But if the United States nevertheless did so, would Portugal have allies, or would it seek for allies?

GONCALVES: In that case we should have to count on our own forces alone.

My last question, Mr Prime Minister. On 25 April, the first anniversary of the revolution, free elections to a National Constituent Assembly are to take place in Portugal. Can you, as head of the Government and a general, guarantee that these elections will really take place?

GONCALVES: Of course.

But the academic nature of the whole exercise was made clear when he stated (27 April):

"No matter what they are, the election results will not have any decisive influence on Portugal's revolutionary process."

3. Admiral Coutinho (& friends)

A MAGNIFICENT PREDATORY SMILE that displayed all his teeth appeared on the round face of Antonio Rosa Coutinho when, with comically exaggerated surprise, he exclaimed "Me?" He wanted to indicate the absurdity of the idea of regarding him as a key figure among the military rulers of Portugal. Dissemblance, however, is not one of his talents. True, he pointed out with apparent modesty that he was only one of many, but then in a sudden bold phrase he admitted the leading position he really occupies. "I do everything that is strategically connected with the Revolution," he said to me. Then, to strike a more casual note and also to avoid creating the impression that he was a mere theorist, he added: "I chop wood for everyone."

His set-up is on the fourth floor of a new palatial office building with coloured window panes and a great deal of chromium decoration. The elegant structure has recently been put to a new purpose. Instead of the tourist firms that were to have been accommodated here, rather mysterious men whose activities are obscure to most of the citizens of Lisbon have moved in. They are soldiers in civilian clothes, and they constitute the staff of the political department of the Movement of the Armed Forces. The address is 50 Rua Castilho.

Admiral Coutinho is the Chief of Staff of the political department of the Movement. Since the Portuguese political parties have taken the sub-

missive step of announcing their willingness to accept the MFA as the motor and dominant force in Portugal for the next three to five years, it constitutes the central instrument of power. Thus the position of its Chief of Staff is that of secretary-general of the revolutionary movement that has undertaken to turn Portugal into a "model Socialist country."

Coutinho is popularly known as the "Red Admiral." He is aged forty-nine, his grey hair is cut short, he has twinkling eyes, and his language is that of an officer unused to contradiction. He has the reputation of "shrinking from nothing." He likes swift, decisive action and getting a little more than twenty-four hours out of every day; and he is a man who obviously regards the energetic abuse of his personal strength as a demonstration of it. He gladly admits smoking up to 100 cigarettes a day.

In April last year, when a small group of officers succeeded in overthrowing the decayed Fascist régime in a *coup d'état*, he was one of the key members of the conspiracy. His rank was that of commander. He was promoted to four-star Admiral, and since then has been one of the leading members of the Junta. Frequent radical statements and the unusual vitality that he radiates have exposed him to the suspicion of belonging to the "extreme left" of the Movement. The precise official position that he occupies is still obscure to the Portuguese. In conversation he denies he is "a secret friend of the Communists", as many maintain; and his denial sounds plausible, for he does not exempt the Communists from the criticism that with mounting anger, which sometimes grows to repulsion, he hurls at all the country's political parties. He says they are too selfish, too confused, too strife-ridden, too destructive to be entrusted with the responsibility of government. Only the Armed Forces Movement, he says, is capable of preventing "the people from falling back into the hole out of which we have just pulled them."

In this he expresses the opinion of nearly all the officers of the Movement, who regard themselves as social reformers. Their ideas about "the path to Socialism" differ greatly. Without accepting any "model", they say they aim at an ideal form of Socialism, imagining often with naïve confidence that the Portuguese, who in the distant past were able to show the world new ways, will create something entirely unprecedented and possible to them alone. The more difficult the realisation of such a Utopian vision turns out to be, the more the officers are inclined to accept an anti-party, anti-parliamentary stance as their common denominator.

COUTINHO IS SATISFIED with the Communists only to the extent that they have been putting no

difficulties in the way of the Armed Forces Movement. He points out that it is often misleading to be taken in by the flattery of the Communists, their praise for everything that the officers have been doing. He says that in spite of that, the Armed Forces Movement is not in any serious danger of being taken in tow by the Communists, and that the impression that the opposite is the case is the work of alarmists. "I know," he said with a knowing smile, "that by giving the Communists a share in government we have broken the current rules of the game."

The reason why the Communists who are exposed to so much suspicion have occasion to applaud the officers is revealed when one discovers the plans Coutinho has been developing. If he has his way, a new Mass Party will be founded, a Popular Front, which will take over the Armed Forces programme. It will be flanked by two opposition parties, one more conservative, one more radical. This may still be only a threat, intended to make the party politicians pliable and force them into a role in which they would be mere pawns, on the political chessboard. But I had the impression that the Admiral undoubtedly finds his own ideas very seductive. He himself, he claims, would not come forward as founder of the Party, but perhaps his bright young men would take the leading role. "The chaps must be kept busy", he says.

Barely a hundred of the brightest and best of these have been formed into a special unit, known as the Fifth Division, and they provide the political vanguard of the Armed Forces Movement. They feel themselves to be an organising *élite*, and they travel all over the country imparting revolutionary zeal to the inert masses. After "three to five years", the Admiral believes, 90% of the population will have been indoctrinated with a way of thinking that will definitively exclude any ideological relapse.

THE MEN OF THE FIFTH DIVISION call their work "dynamisation." Equipped with full powers that make them seem almost omnipotent, they seem to be having no great difficulty in "winning the confidence of the broad masses." Adapting themselves to the requirements of the immediate situation, and blithely ignoring old laws, claims to property, and traditional usage, the specialists of the Fifth Division act as Advisers, Reformers, and Judges. It is largely due to them that the MFA seems to be more popular than any political party, particularly in the villages. Posters printed in huge numbers proclaim an identity of interests between the Armed Forces Movement and the People. Reassuring friendly placards in tasteful colours are intended to promulgate the idea that the Army is a real People's

Army. No doubt about it, able psychologists have been at work. They have found innumerable ways of subtly exploiting the device so successfully used in last year's Revolution: planting carnations in the barrels of the soldiers' rifles.

Establishing what the interests of the Armed Forces Movement really are has not become any easier since April 25 last year. But a conversation with Coutinho, combined with meetings with other leading figures in the Movement, helps to make out at least the outlines of the revolutionary movement, though important details remain obscure because the officers try to present themselves as a fraternal unit of like-minded men among whom there is no conflict or struggle for power.

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT is provided by a Junta of twenty-nine that calls itself the "Revolutionary Council" and consists exclusively of officers. The Junta generally meet three times a week. All its members are delegates of the General Assembly of the Movement, which consists of 160 officers, as well as 40 non-commissioned officers and other ranks. The Army provides 120 delegates, and the Navy and Air Force 60 each. Delegates to the General Assembly are elected by soldiers', sailors' and airmen's councils. The General Assembly is gaining in importance, and no officer in the Junta, however prominent or senior in rank, can afford to ignore its views.



IN A PURELY NOMINAL SENSE, the most important man in the country is General Costa Gomes, who is President of the Republic, head of the Revolutionary Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and who was until last year Chief-of-Staff under the dictatorship. I found him to be a middle-sized, stout gentleman, as reserved as a court official and as hard to see through as an elegant confidence trickster; aged sixty, and with academic education. There can be no doubt that he is not to be classified as a "left-wing revolutionary", and for that reason all the hopes of the urban middle-class are concentrated on him, though it seems clear that, like General Spínola before him, he is more a prisoner than a wielder of power.

In the foreground the tone is set by the Prime Minister, Vasco Gonçalves. This 54-year-old

Army Engineer was the intellectual ring-leader of the original group of conspirators. He is a clever, composed individual with a scholar's lined face and sophisticated manners, and he has already transferred his place of residence to the Government villa in which Salazar once lived. Though he became head of the Government only last summer, I had the sense that he is already a master of the political fine art of being able to look into an abyss without feeling giddy. Goncalves surprised all those who took him to be "a dreamer"; those who believed that "a man who could hardly ride had mounted a race-horse" must now note with astonishment that the Prime Minister turns out to be quite a practised jockey.

On public occasions the place on his right hand is generally taken by an athletic, bearded General whose favourable garb is a short green leather jacket; he leans forward like a wrestler ready to spring, and there is a note of grimness about him. This is Carlos Fabiao, who at 44 is the commander-in-chief of the 80,000-strong Portuguese Army. He was promoted from lieutenant-colonel to four-star General on the recommendation of a new selection committee, and he is the most important figure on the military side of the movement. He spent seven years as an infantryman in various theatres of war in the Portuguese colonies, and the effect that this had on him applies to many revolutionary officers.

"A Pretty Revolution"

GENERAL OTELO DE CARVALHO, *Military Governor of Lisbon and Commander of Copcon, the security forces, launched a bitter verbal attack on Portuguese "counter-revolutionaries" yesterday (16 June 1975.)*

He said he was "inclined to think it would have been better to put hundreds or even thousands of counter-revolutionaries up against the wall, or at least to have confined them in the bullring at the time of the revolution in April, 1974, thus eliminating them at birth.

"I have the impression that at that time there were no counter-revolutionaries, or at least they were afraid to show themselves. We wanted to make a humanist revolution, a very pretty one with carnations. Now we find ourselves having to make a tremendous effort to carry it through."

Gen. Carvalho's forces were active throughout yesterday and on Sunday night in a nationwide security sweep.

The General, one of the most powerful men in the Armed Forces Movement, spoke his mind at a "fraternisation" meeting of officers, sergeants and soldiers. The Portuguese people were "confused", he said. Strife between the political parties had "enormously disgusted the people."

DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

Convinced of the military hopelessness of the wars, he felt misused by Portugal's allies and betrayed by an upper class which grew richer and richer, at home. Like a hunter trying to pick up new trails, he searched and searched for an honourable way out, and it was this that led him to conceive of himself as a Socialist. His idea of Socialism is "a Portugal in which justice prevails."

Fabiao's appearance can easily lead to false conclusions about him. He looks like commanders one has known, who order the continuation of a battle in which heavy losses have been suffered regardless of the cries of the wounded. In reality I suspect he is a tender-hearted brooder marked by melancholy, with a *gosto de ser triste*, as it is known in Portugal, a taste for feeling sad. He is *persona grata* with the leading figures of the libertarian parties.

BUT THE FRAGILITY of the most impregnable-seeming bastions in an ideologising revolutionary army is shown by the diminished influence of Brigadier-General Otelio de Carvalho, who organised and commanded the military *coup* that overthrew the dictatorship. He is a brash, cheerful soldier, the uncomplicated lines of whose character are written on his face. Until recently neither General Fabiao nor Admiral Coutinho would have been described as strong men. The strong man was Carvalho, who is the military commander of Lisbon and commander of the mobile reserve. No one has yet tried to deprive him of this position of power, but arbitrary actions have exposed him to suspicion and have led to his being regarded as something of a lone wolf, rather isolated from his companions. He is said to have been opposed from the outset to calling for "the cooperation of party politicians." The fact that the officers of the Junta have now committed themselves to an unprecedented Dual Rule agreement with the politicians is regarded as a guarantee of their democratic intentions. This was stated by Admiral Coutinho who told me: "Every purely military government leads inevitably to a dictatorship and thus to the Right. We have studied the mistakes of other revolutions and learned lessons from them. . . ."

However honestly these words were spoken subjectively, objectively they betray a lack of understanding of the special pressures to which Portugal's democratic parties are subjected. The Admiral declines even to consider the possibility that one of the parties now sharing in the government might one day cease following military leadership on their way to Socialism. "It is impossible," he says. "The people would promptly abandon such a party."

Only one eventuality makes Coutinho hesitate, namely that the Socialist party, having won a

majority in the elections, might, say six months later, declare war on the government—completely in harmony with the voters' mandate, the Will of the People. But he does not spend much time thinking about such a prospect which he regards as "unnecessary." Revolutionary disenchantment in Portugal? He was convinced that disillusion-

ment would come more quickly to others than to him and his friends, and his body shook with amusement as, with the comically exaggerated surprise, he exclaimed: "In six months?" With a magnificent burst of laughter he added: "How do I know what parties will still exist in six month's time?"

First dialogue of Gog and Magog

Upon a hill I heard them talking
Big Gog and little Magog:
"I thought by now I should know better"
said little Magog to Gog.

"All I know is that the sun rises
then sets below the tree.
By now I ought to know why this
odd thing happens to be."

Said Gog to little Magog:
"And why me and you?
And what and where and when and how
And who my god is who?"

Said little Magog to Gog
as they looked down at the sea:
"If that's our mother and our father
what kind of Gogs are we?"

And Gog said to little Magog
"I hear a dove in a tree
bubbling like a sermoniser.
But does it hear me?"

Big Gog and little Magog
stared into each other's eyes
and they saw the sun and the moon and the stars
like the jewels of paradise.

"O Gog," said little Magog
"Things all go whence they came.
Let's you and I, my dear friend Gog,
get up and do the same."

And little Magog and Gog
stepped down into the sea
just as if it was god's blue eye
and they were you and me.

George Barker

LETTERS

"Poisoning the Wells of Academe"

PROFESSOR HERBERT ELLISON (of the Institute for Comparative and Foreign Area Studies at the University of Washington) misses the force of my argument that "tenure may encourage academic licence and abuse" [ENCOUNTER, August 1974]. When tenure functions as sinecure—and it almost always does—it removes all the risk that normally attends irresponsible behaviour. Thus, it enables the academic who desires to speak, write and act irresponsibly to do so without risk. The absence of risk may thus be conducive not to truth and freedom but to propaganda and licence. I fail to see that Mr Ellison has shown that "it is not the institution of tenure that is at fault." Tenure as an *ideal* may not be at fault; but tenure functioning as the debased reality of sinecure most certainly is. It is not the only cause but a significant one nonetheless.

Professor Ellison mistakenly supposes that I confuse "the issue of academic tenure with that of political freedom." That confusion was made by academics when they first began to defend irresponsible political remarks under the name of academic freedom. I am fully aware that historically academic freedom was designed to protect only intellectual rather than political freedom. But in practice it has become difficult if not impossible to distinguish one from the other, and in recent years a deliberate effort has been made to confuse the two.

I thoroughly agree with Mr Ellison's statement that the general laxity of rating standards and the repudiation of scholarly excellence are far more serious than any individual deviations by isolated faculty members. We have mistakenly supposed that the need to equalise educational opportunity requires us to equalise educational performance. This glaring *non sequitur* will bedevil higher education for many years to come.

JOHN R. SILBER

Boston University

"From Texas to Sussex"

CONTRARY TO WHAT Professor John Silber says ("Letters", June), my whole concern was to defend the *right* of free speech, not the "value" of free speech, as the Sussex School of English and American Studies euphemistically called it (January p. 88). Even if Samuel Huntington had held the opinions that were incorrectly attributed to him, I would have supported his right to lecture. By demonstrating the extreme dishonesty of the Sussex demonstration, I merely hoped to expose the absurd rationalisations that can motivate protest when dissenters ignore basic facts.

I believe, as I said, that "by and large" the American anti-War movement was more realistic than British protest is today. But any movement as diffuse as American dissent was is bound to have more than its share of "romantics." One has only to re-read

Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (1968) to appreciate Professor Silber's point. My use of the word "appropriate" referred not to domestic burnings, kidnappings, murders, and bombings—but to the legitimate, non-violent movement in which the vast majority of protesters participated. Those who confused means and ends and perpetrated crimes, on either side, were, or should have been, disciplined.

Professor Silber accuses me of not offering any evidence that the American protest movement "caused" anything. I doubt that any social scientist will ever be able to construct an exact proof that dissent either accelerated or retarded the American withdrawal from Viet Nam, although Professor Silber makes a rather impressionistic attempt.

I never argued that protest at the Chicago Convention made any converts to the anti-war movement. One of the real tragedies of 1968 was that most activists, as Democrats (at least in sympathy), found themselves opposing fellow-Democrats instead of their traditional rivals, the Republicans, who with a few exceptions supported the War in Viet Nam. It was this factional strife that destroyed the unity of one political party and permitted the other to win by default.

The 1970 protest that Professor Silber calls a "sideshow" to the invasion of Cambodia may, indeed, have been ineffective. Certainly the Attorney General, John Mitchell, did his best to keep the circus going despite the National Guard killings at Kent State University. But I cannot agree with Professor Silber's suggestion that the American people would have forced Congress to end the Cambodian involvement more quickly, if students and others had not protested. Professor Silber's "might have" is mere speculation.

IN MY ARTICLE I made one passing reference to a friend's participation in the Viet Nam Moratorium march in Washington. Professor Silber mistakenly assumes that I believe this particular demonstration contributed to the end of the War. My own opinion is that the mass momentum of American dissent had been lost by 1972, and that protest during Nixon's term of office was not as productive as it had been during Johnson's.

I am surprised that Professor Silber cites any statement by H. R. Haldeman as documentary evidence for any conclusion. Whether Haldeman is an "expert" at anything is debatable.

I agree that protest in America was too often motivated by identity-crisis egotism; but at least it was less frequently associated than it is in Britain with utopian notions of universal Revolution.

As a student during the Viet Nam conflict, I had a deferment from the draft until conscription-by-lottery became law. The end of the draft was "convenient" not only for the affluent, but more importantly for the poor, who did most of the involuntary dying in Viet Nam. I cannot agree that the termination of conscription has removed "a powerful check upon the deployment of troops." Control of the military is invested constitutionally in the Congress. The armed forces of the United States are legally deployed only by the elected representatives of the people. If these congressmen exercise their proper responsibility, and

put country above class, there need be no conflict of interest. After all, protest against the War in Viet Nam was always a middle-class movement. As a long-time supporter of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) on university campuses, Professor Silber himself bears some responsibility for the politicisation of American higher education.

Do British citizens *really* feel that their military officers would be more responsive to civilian authority if they were trained in uniform at Sussex, Oxford and Cambridge?

MICHAEL VANNOY ADAMS

Brighton

Tindall's "Writers"

GILLIAN TINDALL'S *The Writer's Status* [ENCOUNTER, March] must surely hold some kind of record for the concatenation of non-sequiturs. On the evidence of its opening words, it is about Public Lending Right; in which case her title and everything it subsumes are one long irrelevance. The question is begged at the outset by assuming that *PLR* is a handout and not a right.

Whatever has it to do with the matter whether this or that writer associates income with esteem, whether he has crises of identity, whether he works better after doing the washing-up or looking out of the window? All this, to quote the admirable Earl of Clincham, is as piffle before the wind. The writer's claim for *PLR* is simply that of any self-employed artisan for the hire of what he has produced.

Every broadcast or performance of a play brings in a royalty. What logical difference is there between hearing it and taking out a library copy? Song writers can be good or bad, filthily rich or struggling; they may be stimulated or stifled by doing the washing-up; but when played, they're paid, however much washing-up Miss Tindall might think their art requires. They are paid because there is a demand for what they supply. Why should this universal economic principle be scrapped for writers alone?

Amid such inspissated inconsequence, it is hard to know which fallacy to pick up first. Knowing, apparently, a good many writers, she has surely registered that fact that, in common with other human beings, they are not all alike. If, for instance, she is impervious to physical fatigue and finds it not to affect her work, she should thank her stars, not tell less robust fellow practitioners what's good for them. It is one thing to have done a practical job among other people before setting out to write; this has been valuable to many novelists from Conrad down. It is something else to write in spare time after a day's work and half-an-hour in the Tube. Has it struck her that in these conditions work which calls for extensive background reading or research cannot be done at all?

Who are these writers she knows who think of *PLR* as a status symbol? Do none of them simply want to write as well as they can, and find that this takes time? Or to visit places they mean to write about? Or to concentrate without interruption? Evidently some do, and say so; but Miss Tindall knows better.

Having got my own first chance to do the work of my choice by the long-odds fluke of selling film rights in a deservedly forgotten novel for a picture that was never made ("Goodness had nothing to do with it"), I feel some obligation to assert the right of other people to a wage they have fairly earned. I take this, rightly or wrongly, to be Miss Tindall's central issue. Whatever may be said for the working methods she recommends so warmly, they do seem to make for a certain discontinuity.

MARY RENAUT

Capetown,
South Africa

FIRSTLY, MY ARTICLE was not "about" *PLR*, as Mary Renault tries hard to make out, sweepingly declaring that "the title and everything it subsumes are one long irrelevance"! I would respectfully point out to her that the title and the main content *are* the article, and that the question of *PLR* (mentioned only in paragraph 1) is simply the stepping-off point for the discussion of a deeper issue.

Secondly, the case for paying writers more has been frequently stated, sometimes fairly, sometimes with gross sentimentality and parochialism. I wrote my article as a counter-attack to this, because I felt that the opposite case needed stating, and it is in this context that it should be read.

Thirdly, by her own remark that she has herself enjoyed "the long-odds fluke of selling film rights in a deservedly forgotten novel" Mary Renault would seem to confirm much of what I say about the essentially arbitrary nature of the rewards of writing.

GILLIAN TINDALL

London

Mishan & Inflation

SOME TIME AGO [Letters, January], I had the poor taste to accuse Professor E. J. Mishan of committing the fallacy of composition. By that, I meant that what is evidently true within a single industry—that unionisation can make a price (but not a continual rate of price increase) higher than otherwise—cannot possibly be true over any sustained period for the economy as a whole. It cannot be true because people's budgets are not unlimited.

In a revealingly lame reply ["Letters", March], Mishan makes the stunning observation that "prices are rising at an unprecedented rate", as though inflation were inconsistent with any explanation but his own. But Mishan then undergoes a belated conversion to monetarism, which subverts his earlier analysis. He now claims that "the supply of money has been increasing in Britain in large part owing to the extent of wage concessions." This dependence of money growth on wage rates can only mean that (1) the monetary authorities cannot control the money supply, which is demonstrably untrue; or that (2) the monetary authorities deliberately use inflation to avoid the unemployment that would otherwise result from labour pricing itself out of the market. The latter argument implies that unions don't

Ignazio Silone at 75



HE WAS BORN as Secondo Tranquilli, the son of a poor family of peasants and weavers in the Abruzzi town of Pescina, on the 1st May 1900 . . . a date which even the most absent-minded would remember. His alias as a revolutionary and his nom-de-plume as a writer was perhaps derived from an Abruzzi mountain rebel named Quintus Pompaelius Silo who led a successful insurrection against Rome in 90 B.C. on behalf of the rights of the Marsers. In any case we know how deep are his historic roots in his native region from one of his later works, a success both as a book and a play, "The History of a Poor Christian", which deals with the tragedy of the Abruzzian Pope, Coelestin.

His mother and five other children, perished in the earthquake of 1905. A brother died in a fascist prison. But no less strong in his memory remains the picture of those "cafoni", the poor workers in the fields, who lived in the villages around Pescina, came to town to market and passed by his childhood house.

Silone's career as an Italian Communist and his break with the Stalinist Comintern has often been described, and nowhere better than in his own still valuable account in Crossman's volume called "The God that Failed." The occasion—and it is a detail which one forgets—was his refusal to sign a document which he had not been given to read. He fought for the honour of his signature, even for the dignity of a name which was not originally his own. In the Mussolini years he lived in exile in Switzerland (1930–44), mostly in Zurich. In a sense he was "doubly alienated", having broken with both comrades and country, and it left literature as his only home. It was his very loneliness and isolation, deepened by illness, which gave a special character to his novel "Fontamara" and possibly gave it a note which in those days facilitated its immense popularity. It was translated into several dozen languages, enjoyed both literary and political favour (and Leon Trotsky, himself a refugee, hoped it would be circulated in millions of copies).

Still, his essential temperament—for all his political commitments and ideological polemics—was far from abstract word-spinning. It was that of a teller of tales, as any one who has enjoyed hearing an anecdote from his lips knows; and he continued as a fabulist, a writer of stories, plays and novels. Even in his non-fiction his mind turns always to the

specific example, the human fact, in setting out an analysis, as in his very early and still Marxian book on "Fascism, Its Origin and Development" (Zurich, 1934). In his subsequent work entitled "The School for Dictators" (reissued some years ago by Gollancz) this trait was reinforced by his distaste for his countrymen's habit of grandiloquent rhetoric. His anti-fascist bitterness was tempered by his ironic wit.

"In our Italian literature there is the figure of Don Ferrante, a Milanese ideologue of the 18th century, who reflected long and deep over the cholera epidemic which had been sweeping through the Northern provinces. According to Aristotle, as he well knew, there could only be two categories: accidental things and substantial things. But inasmuch as the cholera symptoms and consequences appeared to fit into neither of these fundamental categories, it could therefore not exist. This conclusion, however, did not prevent him from being infected and passing away. . . ."

I FELT FOR A LONG TIME that "Fontamara" (1933), "Bread and Wine" (1936), and the other novels centred around the revolutionary Pietro Spina, constituted the real heart of Silone's body of work. Reconsidering his career, I wonder whether that place should not rather be given to his autobiographical contributions, his personal memoirs as well as his general reflections (ENCOUNTER once published his long memorable essay on "Re-thinking Progress" [March/April 1968]); for they do, taken together, constitute something of an "Uscita di sicurezza", an emergency exit for 20th-century man.

Silone always preferred to be an old-fashioned, rather than a fashionable, writer. Yet he always appeared to be spanning a vast arc from the ancient past to the imminent future, from a bygone world of feudal and Christian values to the "Post-Industrial Society." When I first met him he was only forty, and I remember being so struck by his capacity to maintain long silences, punctuated every now and then by sudden bursts of reminiscence. His withdrawal was not indifference or timidity but modesty; and his communication was, when it came, deeply personally felt. It was, as I came to know, the very rhythm of a master, and the special quality which bound him to all his readers as a "compagno." His companions greet him on his seventy-fifth birthday in Rome.

François Bondy

notice the erosion of real wages, and that there exists a durable trade-off between unemployment and inflation—both statements being conspicuously inconsistent with rational behaviour and observed reality.

Because I deplore the capricious income redistribution, social costs, and resource misallocation arising from union strongholds, I am reluctant to accept uncritically a position that implies that the gains of a powerful union are shared generally, rather than being at the expense of relatively unorganised workers. Nor could I be comfortable with the view that the relative advantages of certain unions are not real at all, but are nullified by inflation. Fortunately, such a decidedly pro-union stance, implied by the wage-push demonology, is not necessary to explain inflation. In the U.S., for example, the average hourly nominal wage increase was successively smaller in every single year from 1956 (5.2%) through 1961 (3.1%), though unemployment certainly didn't rise continuously in those years. Either we give due credit to an heroic refusal to let annual money growth exceed 2% during that period, or we are forced into the rather implausible theory that unions became less and less greedy each year.

In short, Mishan's attempt to explain the ups-and-downs of inflation by erratic cycles of private greed (which is really a constant) cannot absolve the monetary authorities from their total responsibility for persistent inflation.

ALAN REYNOLDS

*National Review,
New York City*

WITH REFERENCE TO Mr Reynolds' second paragraph, all economists agree that prolonged inflation is impossible without a growing supply of money, irrespective of their differences of opinion over the chief "causes." Technically speaking, the supply of money can always be controlled by the monetary authority; but political difficulties arise inasmuch as attempts to abate inflation by curbing the growth in the money supply initially entails increased unemployment. I have no objection to Mr Reynolds' blunter statement that "the monetary authorities deliberately use inflation to avoid unemployment that would otherwise result from labour pricing itself out of the market."

But, contrary to his assertion, such a statement does not imply that trade unions are unaware of "the erosion of real wages." For one thing, real wages are not eroding for many groups in Britain. As he indicates in his following paragraph, powerful trade unions are gaining absolutely and at the expense of weaker ones. Even if it were otherwise, the obvious interest of every group in an inflation is to keep abreast—and ahead, if possible—irrespective of the outcome which none can control. Nor is there any implication of "a durable trade-off between unemployment and inflation." The relationship, whatever its character, need not be durable; and indeed, it is variable. As for the relationship in question, it is today closer to a trade-off between unemployment and the *rate of increase* of inflation—Milton Friedman's "natural rate of unemployment" being the

critical level of unemployment at which the rate of inflation remains stable.

Turning to Mr Reynolds' last paragraph, his sentiments do him credit, though not because of their novelty. Apart from his being so forthrightly critical of positions that no one seeks to defend, his terminology is awry. A wage-push "demonology" of inflation (as distinct, presumably, from a monetarist "demonology") hardly implies a "pro-union" stance. I suppose he means "anti-union", although the adjective might better describe Mr Nigel Lawson's position than my own.

His figures of declining wage increases from 1956 to 1961 are interesting in view of the fact that there are today about 8 million unemployed in the U.S.A. with inflation running at something between 6 and 10%. They are also irrelevant to my thesis, as are his remaining remarks. For what I was writing about was the "New Inflation" of the last half-decade, with special reference to the condition of Britain.

E. J. MISHAN

London School of Economics

Misunderstanding Buchan

IT WAS THE right choice to get Professor Alastair Buchan to review, with his shrewd knowledge and perception, the latest volumes of the *Collected Works of Walter Bagehot* ["Misunderstanding Bagehot", *ENCOUNTER*, May]. But it would have been helpful if you had told your readers why he was the right reviewer. Instead, in the usually helpful biographical note in your list of "Authors", you simply recite the professor's eminence in strategic studies, without mentioning the really relevant facts that he was an Assistant Editor of *The Economist* (under Bagehot's best successor, Geoffrey Crowther) and that he is the author of the best book so far written on Bagehot—*The Spare Chancellor* (Chatto & Windus, 1959).

DONALD TYERMAN

London

The Ultra Secret

CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON [*ENCOUNTER*, March] is not the only ex-member of the Bletchley "Ultra" team whose review of Group Captain Winterbotham's *The Ultra Secret* displays a sense of betrayal. The nature of the oath of secrecy imposed upon him and his colleagues makes this understandable. But there is good warrant for the view that exaction of such a commitment was unrealistic. In any case I believe their belief that the book should not have been allowed to appear is mistaken, and that their anxieties on the subject of security are misplaced. There are in fact, the strongest arguments for the view that concealment of the effectiveness of British intelligence-gathering in the period for which the public records are available is at best of limited advantage only to the national interest, and of none where the target of the intelligence-gathering was our enemy.

Ernest R. May has recently called attention to the enormous role played in American foreign policy

since 1945 by misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the past and its lessons. An equally compelling case could be made out in aspects of recent British policy. (Consider, as only one example, the compelling force the example of the Rhineland exercised on Anthony Eden in 1956.) Yet for the contemporary historian any study of the processes by which British foreign policy is made is necessarily imperfect if one cannot have access to the full range of information available to those responsible for the vital decisions.

To give only one hypothetical example: if Neville Chamberlain was aware in April and May 1939 of the clandestine Nazi-Soviet negotiations, this fact, if known to us, would completely alter our understanding of the reasons which led him to drag his feet and resist the continuous Russian pressure for further concessions. In some cases (examined by the late Professor Toscano as long ago as 1950) statements can be made about the influence of clandestine intelligence on Italian and Soviet foreign policy. Properly to understand the question one must know if the intelligence was good or bad, partial or complete. And as the two examples of Pearl Harbour and Barbarossa show, one must understand the manner in which intelligence was processed and who in power was in the secret.

In the case of the "Ultra" intelligence, however, the facts of British knowledge of German ciphers during the 1914-18 War was revealed long before

Admiral James' book by Admiral Hall to the German ex-saboteur, Captain von Rintelen, who printed the facts in *The Dark Invader*. In the case of "Enigma", British ability to read the German ciphers was made public in the Hearings of the Senate Committee on the Attack on Pearl Harbour in the late 1940s. Readers who would be interested in discovering how much the contemporary historian knows of the cipher battle in the years 1939-41 may be referred to Table 6.1 on p. 154 of the young American political scientist Barton Whaley's *Codeword Barbarossa* (M.I.T., 1973), itself a compilation entirely based on published sources.

What would clearly be regrettable, to judge from comments on Group Captain Winterbotham's book that have already appeared, would be the belated prevention of any other publications by British witnesses. It is only by this process—and ultimately by the release of the documentation—that full advantage may be taken, to the general benefit of the nation, by the historian.

So far as the security of our ciphers and cipher-gathering agencies today are concerned, it is understood that Enigma is as out of date today as the *Playfair* and transportation codes and ciphers it replaced.

D. C. WATT

London School of Economics

Gurdjieff, Sufism & Pseudo-Sufism

Dissenting Views

IN "SUFISM and Pseudo-Sufism" (ENCOUNTER, May) L. P. Elwell-Sutton draws a very proper distinction and does what can only be described as a demolition-job on Idries Shah, author of *The Secret Lore of Magic*.

It is a pity that Elwell-Sutton extends his criticism to George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff since he seems as poorly informed about Gurdjieff and his followers as he is well informed about classical Sufism. A single example will suffice. He says Gurdjieff was a Russian born in the Caucasus in 1872 and is the author of *Views from the Real World*. Gurdjieff did not write *Views from the Real World*; his father was Greek, his mother Armenian; his passport shows that he was born on 28 December 1877 in Alexandropol (formerly Gumru and now Leninakan). These slips are essentially unimportant: what is more damaging is his statement that Idries Shah is the "heir to a movement started some sixty years ago by Gurdjieff."

Elwell-Sutton rests his contention on the fact that in 1965 J. G. Bennett, a serious student of Gurdjieff's ideas, supposing Shah had a significant contribution to make, offered him facilities at his Coombe Springs Institute. He implies in effect a sort of Gurdjieffian succession: Gurdjieff-Ouspensky-Bennett-Shah.

Let us examine this hypothesis coolly.

The notion of succession from Gurdjieff to Ouspensky is scarcely tenable since the latter pre-

deceased the former. The link Ouspensky-Bennett also falls down because, quite contrary to Elwell-Sutton's assertion, Ouspensky was unconnected with Bennett's groups at Coombe Springs and in fact never set foot there. It might perhaps be argued that Bennett had a direct connection with Gurdjieff. He did. But he was always quite frank about a gap in their association so enormous as to preclude any question of succession: "As things turned out I left the Prieuré in August 1923 and did not set eyes on Gurdjieff again for twenty-five years." Just fifteen months after their re-encounter Gurdjieff died in the American hospital in Paris. The date was 29 October 1949.

Gurdjieff was a unique phenomenon: there could be no question of "succession" in the sense of any contemporary replacing him. Nevertheless when he died the heavy responsibility for sustaining his work in Paris, New York, and London was shouldered by his senior pupil, who had spent thirty years with him from 1919 in Tiflis onward. Meanwhile Bennett turned away to pursue an eclectic line, establishing relationships with Pak Subuh, Idries Shah, the Shivapuri Baba and others. As for Shah himself, he never even met Gurdjieff.

It boils down to this: however generously Bennett may have treated Shah in 1965, he certainly did not deliver him the Gurdjieff movement, for the pluperfect

reason that it was never within his gift. Elwell-Sutton's hypothesis will simply not hold water.

The indictment of al-Sarraj against those "who parade themselves as Sufis" can scarcely be sustained against Gurdjieff. His magnum opus *Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson* contains 1,238 pages—how often do the words "Sufi" or "Sufism" appear? One hundred times? Five hundred times? The answer is—not once. Admittedly Rafael Lefort's *The Teachers of Gurdjieff* (1966), which Elwell-Sutton apparently regards as a document worth adducing, reports that these teachers were venerable Sufis. This claim continues to attract certain naive young people into the pseudo-Sufi camp, but it should not seriously confuse posterity, since to conform with established Gurdjieff chronology these "Sufi Teachers" would have had to be centenarians when interviewed by "Lefort" in the 1960s. One is left questioning the motive for this rather puerile work and the identity of its pseudonymous author, coyly sheltering beneath a botched anagram of "A Real Effort." The guide-book *Alternative London* gives currency to the persistent rumour that the author is Idries Shah himself.

GURDJIEFF'S IDEAS (as lucidly reflected in *In Search of the Miraculous*) are essentially addressed to the Western mind. Although as yet espoused by only a handful of people, the ideas themselves constitute an *Existenzphilosophie* as embracing and self-sufficient as Marxism, Freudianism, or any of the other big modern critiques. Elwell-Sutton is perfectly entitled to his value-judgment that those attracted to these ideas are inadequate people with various character weaknesses. His view, however, should be seen in the context of his evident unfamiliarity with the material and judged against the fact that Gurdjieff drew into his sphere many pupils of the finest quality besides such figures as René Daumal, Katherine Mansfield, and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Twenty-five years have passed since Gurdjieff died. For better or for worse, the note which he struck resonates in the domain of ideas. Study groups are planted in five continents and have taken firm root in Paris, New York and London. It is evident that the nucleus of these groups will exert themselves to carry Gurdjieff's work into a future which no one can predict with certainty.

JAMES MOORE

Royal Asiatic Society,
London

REFERRING to the article "Sufism and Pseudo-Sufism" in the May issue of your magazine, as members of the Council of the Gurdjieff Society we would like to point out to your readers four fundamental inaccuracies. We trust you will be good enough to print this letter.

1. Idries Shah has no connection with the work of Gurdjieff, although both share an appreciation of Mullah Nassr Eddin.

2. The name Rafael Lefort is obviously a contrived one. But whoever it was who wrote the book *Teachers of Gurdjieff*, it is surely evident that he was not a follower of Gurdjieff.

3. The writer seems to have derived most of his information about Gurdjieff from the books of J. G.

Bennett. Bennett was a man immensely interested in ideas, and from time to time attached himself to one leader or another. However, at the time when he transferred Coombe Springs to Shah he had been following the ideas of Subud and other teachers for several years.

4. Those who worked with Ouspensky during the period from 1936 know that he had no connection with Coombe Springs—let alone lived there.

MICHAEL CURRER-BRIGGS
Hon. Sec.

The Gurdjieff Society,
London

IF WE DISCOUNT the strictly polemic element—the maze of hair-splitting irrelevancies introduced in your contributor's piece on Sufism—three basic questions arise concerning the contribution of Idries Shah.

(1) Is there a communications problem in the translation of Sufi literature and in transferring the ideas into our culture; and who, if anyone, can overcome this problem if it exists?

(2) What is the social, scholarly and Sufis standing of Idries Shah, more particularly on his home ground?

(3) Does Shah oppose cultishness and guruism in Sufi activity?

The answers, in a current book in which scholars and specialists examine these questions, are found therein as follows:

(1) The transfer problem and who is best fitted to provide us with Sufi materials; by a Persian professor and specialist in Sufism:

"It is important to understand that ordinary scholars, however profound, whether they be in the East or West, may not be able to understand Persian and other Sufi literature without a proper Sufi background. Sufis have written most of the great literature of Persia, and much of it is written in a very specialised manner. It has more than one meaning. Many mistakes have been made both in translation and in trying to explain Sufi ideas by people who do not understand this multiple-meaning characteristic of Sufi literature. That is why Idries Shah's works are so important and deserve careful study by scholars and intellectuals."¹

(2) Shah's credentials, by an Afghan former Minister of Education, a Persian scholar who is one of his country's foremost scholars; quoted by an Arab Professor, who says, "One of the great authorities of the Sufis is Idries Shah." He cites Sirdar Faiz Mohammed Khan:

"The Musavi Saiyids of Afghanistan and Khans of Paghman are recognized as the descendants of the Prophet. . . . They are recognized to be of the most noble descent of Islam and are respected as Sufi teachers and erudite scholars. Saiyid Idries Shah, son of the late Saiyid Ikbal Ali Shah, is personally known to me as an honourable man whose rank, titles and descent are attested and known by repute."²

¹ Professor N. S. Fatemi, in *Sufi Studies*, "A Message and Method of Love, Harmony and Brotherhood", p.50, footnote 2.

² Professor M. Y. Haschmi, *Sufi Studies*, "Spirituality, Science and Psychology in The Sufi Way", p.116.

(3) Does Shah oppose "Guruism" and pursue a scholarly acceptable course of projection? The Pakistani Professor I. H. Qureshi, Vice-Chancellor of Karachi University, Sufi scholar and President of the Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, says:

"There is an increasing tendency in the Western world to adopt extravagant religious beliefs from Oriental sources, generally called guruism, because such beliefs are usually ascribed to some 'Master.' Thousands of people now follow these cults, and their proliferation and absurdities have given rise to real concern among genuinely thinking people. It is thus of the greatest importance to realise that Idries Shah is selecting and publishing materials of real authenticity and high literary merit, and that he has been struggling against the fantasies and absurdities of 'guru-ism' for years. It is a good thing to have an active representative of Eastern thought in the West whose mind is free of such

absurdities, and who possesses sufficient intellectual calibre to be able to communicate with, and to command the respect of, scholars, literati, and other persons of serious intent."³

These extracts are from the *estschrift* edited by Professor L. F. Rushbrook Williams in honour of Idries Shah and of Jalaluddin Rumi's 700th anniversary, authoritatively answering the fundamental questions I have mentioned (and very many others). It is not only published by E. P. Dutton, Inc., of New York, as your article implies, but also by Octagon Press in association with Jonathan Cape of London.

There is no need to be an Orientalist to perceive Shah's pre-eminence in the Sufi field, whether by attestation (over a hundred scholars collaborated with or encouraged the *estschrift*) or by first-hand study of his many and widely acclaimed works.

DAVID PENDLEBURY

Hove, Sussex

³ Professor I. H. Qureshi, *Sufi Studies*, "Projecting Sufi Thought in an Appropriate Context", p. 27.

Mr Elwell-Sutton will be replying to these and other letters next month.

AUTHORS

Ian McEwan's first book of stories, *First Love, Last Rites*, has recently been published by Jonathan Cape....

Philippe Ariès is a distinguished historian and a frequent contributor to that excellent Paris periodical *Contrepoint*, where this article first appeared. He is the author of *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien regime* (Plon, 1960, new edition 1974), published in England under the title *Centuries of Childhood* (Cape, 1972). His book *Western Attitudes toward Death* was published last year by the Johns Hopkins University Press....

Douglas Johnson is Professor of French History at University College, London. His books include *France and the Dreyfus Affair* (1966), *The French Revolution* (1970) and *A Concise History of France* (Thames & Hudson, 1971)....

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics at the London School of Economics, and Editor of *Middle Eastern Studies*. He is the author of *Nationalism* (1960), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (1971) and *Arabic Political Memoirs* (Frank Cass, 1974)....

J. P. Stern is Professor of German at University College, London. His books include *On Realism* (Routledge, 1973), *Idylls and Realities* (Methuen, 1972) and *Hitler: the Führer and the People* (Fontana, 1975)....

John Wain is Professor of Poetry, University of Oxford; his Oxford lectures will form part of a book to be called *Professing Poetry*. He has recently

been awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for his biography *Samuel Johnson* (Macmillan, 1974)....

Clive James is TV critic for *The Observer*. A collection of his literary criticism, *The Metropolitan Critic*, was published last year by Faber....

Maurice Cranston is Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. His numerous books include *John Locke* (1957), *Rousseau's Social Contract* (1964), *Politics and Ethics* (1972) and *The Mask of Politics* (Allen Lane, 1973)....

Edward Lucie-Smith's books on art criticism include *Movements in Art since 1945* (1969), *Eroticism in Western Art*, and *Symbolist Art* (Thames & Hudson, 1972). His autobiography, *The Burnt Child*, has recently been published by Gollancz....

Constantine FitzGibbon, who served as an Intelligence Officer in the U.S. Army during the War, contributed an article on "The 'Ultra' Secret" to the March 1975 issue of *ENCOUNTER*. His books include *Red Hand: The Ulster Colony* (Michael Joseph, 1971), *A Concise History of Germany* (Thames & Hudson, 1972) and *The Life and Times of Eamon de Valera* (Gill & Macmillan, 1973)....

Brian Glanville is football correspondent for the *Sunday Times*. His most recent novel is *The Comic* (Secker & Warburg, 1974)....

Westminster

DAMP SQUIBS: *The cheekiest of Parliamentary guides is published today. It is Andrew Roth's The MPs' Chart, which gives a potted biography and assessment of outlook and idiosyncrasy of each MP, with a word sketch to help those whose business depends on MP-spotting.*

Such abbreviated judgements of character are inevitably superficial and subjective. It is not adding greatly to the sum of human knowledge to reduce Clement Freud's Weltanschauung to "rightish showbiz gastronome-politico". Some of the sketches are so uncomplimentary as to be nearly libellous.

MPs objected to being described as "bent" in previous editions, and there was talk of legal action. So Mr Roth now describes those with bad postures as "stooped". To avoid misunderstandings by rating MPs as "gay", the chart has substituted such words as "genial" or "jovial." "Damp" has been introduced to tag those who are not quite "wet."

Mrs Thatcher, described in previous editions as "cold-water English rose", is now characterized in an incongruous metaphor as "stainless steel Dresden china."

William Price, Parliamentary Secretary to the Privy Council, was somewhat taken aback to see his entry. The first reaction to his brief description, "released imbecile", was: "I'll have to see Lord Goodman about this."

But, upon reflection, Mr Price, who is described in another column as "headline-catcher" and "quick-witted", came up with a more charitable explanation.

The MPs' Chart trims pungent descriptions to the bare grammatical essentials, but in this case brevity has proved the soul of some unintentional wit. This particular passage means that Mr Price once released an imbecile, and not that he is a released imbecile.

Apparently, about six years ago, Mr Price secured the release of a young male constituent from Broadmoor, as well as £5000 compensation from the Home Office.

THE TIMES/EVENING STANDARD

London

CLICHÉS: Mrs Thatcher will bring about a sharp change of direction. And had better, whatever happens, bring about a sharp change in her prose style. Don Quixote's heart could not have sunk lower than did mine [Bernard Levin writes] at her Eastbourne speech if he had seen his Dulcinea making love with a windmill. "Workers and shirkers"; "liberty and licence"; does she not smell the stale odour of such clichés? If she cannot keep them out of her mind, can she not find even new ways of putting them? Who on earth is writing her speeches?

THE TIMES

London

PENNY-WISE: A reader objects to the use of the word "pea" for that miserable little coin in our

present currency. Surely he does not want it designated by the noble title of "penny."

The penny was a splendid coin, large and of some substance, whose name has been in use since the Middle Ages for a piece of worth-while money and which has taken its place in many of our rhymes and proverbs.

The farthing-sized, insignificant, base-metal token we have been forced to accept merits no more than an initial, and a derogatory one at that.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Salt Lake City

LIBRARY OF TOMORROW: At the "library of tomorrow", a person can read comic books, make posters and recordings, heat up a meal or watch colour television. When he is finished, he can go home with the latest dime-store novel, the No. 1-selling popular record, a Rembrandt reproduction or a sculpture replica.

The library of tomorrow is open today in suburban Salt Lake City—and it also has books.

"The philosophy of library service has really changed", said Guy Schuurman, director of the Whitmore branch of the Salt Lake County library system. "Libraries used to be for little old ladies who wanted to nose through books", said Mr. Schuurman, a 43-year-old Dutchman who did the basic design for the \$1.4-million library as well as formulating its innovative policies. "Now they're centers where all of the information resources and services of the community can be pooled into a network to improve the quality of life."

Whitmore inaugurated its library in mid-November with an open house that an administrator called a three-ring circus. Indeed, there was a clown to entertain the children.

The library has so far been a success. More than 49,000 persons visited it in December, usually a slow month for libraries. By contrast, the larger main branch of the Salt Lake City Public Library had 13,050 visitors.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

VEDGE: Sometimes our language is its own worst enemy. There is something particularly unsatisfactory about the word "vegetable"—an ungainly mushiness that exactly expresses how most British cooks treat any root or green-leaved plant they lay their hands on. Outside a famous line of Marvell's, the word is useless to poets, and in slang is a contemptuous or compassionate description of a person bereft of most human faculties. Contrast the respectful envy conveyed by the French phrase "*gros légume*", and then imagine calling Sir Arnold Weinstock or Sir Donald Stokes a "big vegetable."

THE TIMES

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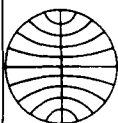
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